THE

ATLANTIC MONTHLY.

A Magazine of Literature, Science, Art, and Politics.

VOL. XXX. — JULY, 1872. — NO. CLXXVII.

SEPTIMIUS FELTON; OR, THE ELIXIR OF LIFE.

VII.

SEPTIMIUS, meanwhile, had betaken himself to the hill-top, which was his place of refuge on all occasions when the house seemed too stifled to contain him; and there he walked to and fro, with a certain kind of calmness and indifference that he wondered at; for there is hardly anything in this world so strange as the quiet surface that spreads over a man's mind in his greatest emergencies; so that he deems himself perfectly quiet, and upbraids himself with not feeling anything, when indeed he is passion-stirred. As Septimius walked to and fro, he looked at the rich crimson flowers, which seemed to be blooming in greater profusion and luxuriance than ever before. He had made an experiment with these flowers, and he was curious to know whether that experiment had been the cause of Aunt Keziah's death. Not that he felt any remorse therefor, in any case, or believed himself to have committed a crime, having really intended and desired nothing but good. I suppose such things (and he must be a lucky physician, methinks, who has no such mischief within his own experience) never weigh with deadly weight on any man's conscience. Something must be risked in the cause of science, and in desperate cases something must be risked for the patient's self. Septimius, much as he loved life, would not have hesitated to put his own life to the same risk that he had imposed on Aunt Keziah; or if he did hesitate, it would have been only because, if the experiment turned out disastrously in his own person, he would not be in a position to make another and more successful trial; whereas, by trying it on others, the man of science still reserves himself for new efforts, and does not put all the hopes of the world, so far as involved in his success, on one cast of the die.

By and by he met Sybil Dacy, who had ascended the hill, as was usual with her, at sunset, and came towards him, gazing earnestly in his face.

"They tell me poor Aunt Keziah is no more," said she.

"She is dead," said Septimius.

"The flower is a very famous medicine," said the girl, "but everything de-

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1872, by JAMES R. OSGOOD & Co., in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pends on its being applied in the proper way."

"Do you know the way, then?" asked Septimius.

"No; you should ask Doctor Portsoaken about that," said Sybil.

Doctor Portsoaken! And so he should consult him. That eminent chymist and scientific man had evidently heard of the recipe, and at all events would be acquainted with the best methods of getting the virtues out of flowers and herbs, some of which, Septimius had read enough to know, were poison in one phase and shape of preparation, and possessed of richest virtues in others; their poison, as one may say, serving as a dark and terrible safeguard, which Providence has set to watch over their preciousness; even as a dragon, or some wild and fiendish spectre, is set to watch and keep hidden gold and heaped-up diamonds. A dragon always waits on everything that is very good. And what would deserve the watch and ward of a dragon, or something more fatal than a dragon, if not this treasure of which Septimius was in quest, and the discovery and possession of which would enable him to break down one of the strongest barriers of nature? It ought to be death, he acknowledged it, to attempt such a thing; for how changed would be life if he should succeed! how necessary it was that mankind should be defended from such attempts on the general rule on the part of all but him! How could Death be spared? — then the sire would live forever, and the heir never come to his inheritance, and so he would at once hate his own father, from the perception that he would never be out of his way. Then the same class of powerful minds would always rule the state, and there would never be a change of policy. [*Here several pages are missing.* — ED.]

Through such scenes Septimius sought out the direction that Doctor Portsoaken had given him, and came to the door of a house in the older part of the town. The Boston of those days had very much the aspect of provincial towns in England, such as may still be seen there, while our own city has undergone such wonderful changes that little likeness to what our ancestors made it can now be found. The streets, crooked and narrow; the houses, many-gabled, projecting, with latticed windows and diamond panes; without sidewalks; with rough pavements.

Septimius knocked loudly at the door, nor had long to wait before a serving-maid appeared, who seemed to be of English nativity; and in reply to his request for Doctor Portsoaken bade him come in, and led him up a staircase with broad landing-places; then tapped at the door of a room, and was responded to by a gruff voice saying, "Come in!" The woman held the door open, and Septimius saw the veritable Doctor Portsoaken in an old, faded morning-gown, and with a night-cap on his head, his German pipe in his mouth, and a brandy-bottle, to the best of our belief, on the table by his side.

"Come in, come in," said the gruff doctor, nodding to Septimius. "I remember you. Come in, man, and tell me your business."

Septimius did come in, but was so struck by the aspect of Doctor Portsoaken's apartment, and his gown, that he did not immediately tell his business. In the first place, everything looked very dusty and dirty, so that evidently no woman had ever been admitted into this sanctity of a place; a fact made all the more evident by the abundance of spiders, who had spun their webs about the walls and ceiling in the wildest apparent confusion, though doubtless each individual spider knew the cordage which he had lengthened out of his own miraculous bowels. But it was really strange. They had festooned their cordage on whatever was stationary in the room, making a sort of gray, dusky tapestry, that waved portentously in the breeze, and flapped, heavy and dismal, each with its spider in the centre of his own system. And what was most marvellous was a spider over the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

doctor's head; a spider, I think of some South American breed, with a circumference of its many legs as big, unless I am misinformed, as a teacup, and with a body in the midst as large as a dollar; giving the spectator horrible qualms as to what would be the consequence if this spider should be crushed, and, at the same time, suggesting the poisonous danger of suffering such a monster to live. The monster, however, sat in the midst of the stalwart cordage of his web, right over the doctor's head; and he looked, with all those complicated lines, like the symbol of a conjurer or crafty politician in the midst of the complexity of his scheme; and Septimius wondered if he were not the type of Doctor Portsoaken himself, who, fat and bloated as the spider, seemed to be the centre of some dark contrivance. And could it be that poor Septimius was typified by the fascinated fly, doomed to be entangled by the web?

"Good day to you," said the gruff doctor, taking his pipe from his mouth. "Here I am, with my brother spiders, in the midst of my web. I told you, you remember, the wonderful efficacy which I had discovered in spiders' webs; and this is my laboratory, where I have hundreds of workmen concocting my panacea for me. Is it not a lovely sight?"

"A wonderful one, at least," said Septimius. "That one above your head, the monster, is calculated to give a very favorable idea of your theory. What a quantity of poison there must be in him!"

"Poison, do you call it?" quoth the grim doctor. "That's entirely as it may be used. Doubtless his bite would send a man to kingdom come; but, on the other hand, no one need want a better life-line than that fellow's web. He and I are firm friends, and I believe he would know my enemies by instinct. But come, sit down, and take a glass of brandy. No? Well, I'll drink it for you. And how is the old aunt yonder, with her infernal nostrum, the bitterness and nauseousness of which my poor stomach has not yet forgotten?"

"My Aunt Keziah is no more," said Septimius.

"No more! Well, I trust in heaven she has carried her secret with her," said the doctor. "If anything could comfort you for her loss, it would be that. But what brings you to Boston?"

"Only a dried flower or two," said Septimius, producing some specimens of the strange growth of the grave. "I want you to tell me about them."

The naturalist took the flowers in his hand, one of which had the root appended, and examined them with great minuteness and some surprise; two or three times looking in Septimius's face with a puzzled and inquiring air; then examined them again.

"Do you tell me," said he, "that the plant has been found indigenous in this country, and in your part of it? And in what locality?"

"Indigenous, so far as I know," answered Septimius. "As to the locality," — he hesitated a little, — "it is on a small hillock, scarcely bigger than a molehill, on the hill-top behind my house."

The naturalist looked steadfastly at him with red, burning eyes, under his deep, impending, shaggy brows; then again at the flower.

"Flower, do you call it?" said he, after a re-examination. "This is no flower, though it so closely resembles one, and a beautiful one, — yes, most beautiful. But it is no flower. It is a certain very rare fungus, — so rare as almost to be thought fabulous; and there are the strangest superstitions, coming down from ancient times, as to the mode of production. What sort of manure had been put into that hillock? Was it merely dried leaves, the refuse of the forest, or something else?"

Septimius hesitated a little; but there was no reason why he should not disclose the truth, — as much of it as Doctor Portsoaken cared to know.

"The hillock where it grew," answered he, "was a grave."

"A grave! Strange! strange!"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quoth Doctor Portsoaken. "Now these old superstitions sometimes prove to have a germ of truth in them, which some philosopher has doubtless long ago, in forgotten ages, discovered and made known; but in process of time his learned memory passes away, but the truth, undiscovered, survives him, and the people get hold of it, and make it the nucleus of all sorts of folly. So it grew out of a grave! Yes, yes; and probably it would have grown out of any other dead flesh, as well as that of a human being; a dog would have answered the purpose as well as a man. You must know that the seeds of fungi are scattered so universally over the world that, only comply with the conditions, and you will produce them everywhere. Prepare the bed it loves, and a mushroom will spring up spontaneously, an excellent food, like manna from heaven. So superstition says, kill your deadliest enemy, and plant him, and he will come up in a delicious fungus, which I presume to be this; steep him, or distil him, and he will make an elixir of life for you. I suppose there is some foolish symbolism or other about the matter; but the fact I affirm to be nonsense. Dead flesh under some certain conditions of rain and sunshine, not at present ascertained by science, will produce the fungus, whether the manure be friend, or foe, or cattle."

"And as to its medical efficacy?" asked Septimius.

"That may be great for aught I know," said Portsoaken; "but I am content with my cobwebs. You may seek it out for yourself. But if the poor fellow lost his life in the supposition that he might be a useful ingredient in a recipe, you are rather an unscrupulous practitioner."

"The person whose mortal relics fill that grave," said Septimius, "was no enemy of mine (no private enemy, I mean, though he stood among the enemies of my country), nor had I anything to gain by his death. I strove to avoid aiming at his life, but he compelled me."

"Many a chance shot brings down the bird," said Doctor Portsoaken. "You say you had no interest in his death. We shall see that in the end."

Septimius did not try to follow the conversation among the mysterious hints with which the doctor chose to involve it; but he now sought to gain some information from him as to the mode of preparing the recipe, and whether he thought it would be most efficacious as a decoction or as a distillation. The learned chemist supported most decidedly the latter opinion, and showed Septimius how he might make for himself a simpler apparatus, with no better aids than Aunt Keziah's teakettle, and one or two trifling things, which the doctor himself supplied, by which all might be done with every necessary scrupulousness.

"Let me look again at the formula," said he. "There are a good many minute directions that appear trifling, but it is not safe to neglect any minutiæ in the preparation of an affair like this; because, as it is all mysterious and unknown ground together, we cannot tell which may be the important and efficacious part. For instance, when all else is done, the recipe is to be exposed seven days to the sun at noon. That does not look very important, but it may be. Then again, 'Steep it in moonlight during the second quarter.' That 's all moonshine, one would think; but there 's no saying. It is singular, with such preciseness, that no distinct directions are given whether to infuse, decoct, distil, or what other way; but my advice is to distil."

"I will do it," said Septimius, "and not a direction shall be neglected."

"I shall be curious to know the result," said Doctor Portsoaken, "and am glad to see the zeal with which you enter into the matter. A very valuable medicine may be recovered to science through your agency, and you may make your fortune by it; though, for my part, I prefer to trust to my cobwebs. This spider, now, is not he a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lovely object? See, he is quite capable of knowledge and affection."

There seemed, in fact, to be some mode of communication between the doctor and his spider, for on some sign given by the former, imperceptible to Septimius, the many-legged monster let himself down by a cord, which he extemporized out of his own bowels, and came dangling his huge bulk down before his master's face, while the latter lavished many epithets of endearment upon him, ludicrous and not without horror, as applied to such a hideous production of nature.

"I assure you," said Doctor Portsoaken, "I run some risk from my intimacy with this lovely jewel, and if I behave not all the more prudently, your countrymen will hang me for a wizard, and annihilate this precious spider as my familiar. There would be a loss to the world; not small in my own case, but enormous in the case of the spider. Look at him now, and see if the mere uninstructed observation does not discover a wonderful value in him."

In truth, when looked at closely, the spider really showed that a care and art had been bestowed upon his make, not merely as regards curiosity, but absolute beauty, that seemed to indicate that he must be a rather distinguished creature in the view of Providence; so variegated was he with a thousand minute spots, spots of color, glorious radiance, and such a brilliance was attained by many conglomerated brilliances; and it was very strange that all this care was bestowed on a creature that, probably, had never been carefully considered except by the two pair of eyes that were now upon it, and that, in spite of its beauty and magnificence, could only be looked at with an effort to overcome the mysterious repulsiveness of its presence; for all the time that Septimius looked and admired, he still hated the thing, and thought it wrong that it was ever born, and wished that it could be annihilated. Whether the spider was conscious of the wish, we are unable to say; but certainly Septimius felt as if he were hostile to him, and had a mind to sting him; and, in fact, Doctor Portsoaken seemed of the same opinion.

"Aha, my friend," said he, "I would advise you not to come too near Orontes! He is a lovely beast, it is true; but in a certain recess of this splendid form of his he keeps a modest supply of a certain potent and piercing poison, which would produce a wonderful effect on any flesh to which he chose to apply it. A powerful fellow is Orontes; and he has a great sense of his own dignity and importance, and will not allow it to be imposed on."

Septimius moved from the vicinity of the spider, who, in fact, retreated, by climbing up his cord, and ensconced himself in the middle of his web, where he remained waiting for his prey. Septimius wondered whether the doctor was symbolized by the spider, and was likewise waiting in the middle of his web for his prey. As he saw no way, however, in which the doctor could make a profit out of himself, or how he could be victimized, the thought did not much disturb his equanimity. He was about to take his leave, but the doctor, in a derisive kind of way, bade him sit still, for he purposed keeping him as a guest, that night, at least.

"I owe you a dinner," said he, "and will pay it with a supper and knowledge; and before we part I have certain inquiries to make, of which you may not at first see the object, but yet are not quite purposeless. My familiar, up aloft there, has whispered me something about you, and I rely greatly on his intimations."

Septimius, who was sufficiently common-sensible, and invulnerable to superstitious influences on every point except that to which he had surrendered himself, was easily prevailed upon to stay; for he found the singular, charlatanic, mysterious lore of the man curious, and he had enough of real science to at least make him an object of interest to one who knew nothing of the matter; and Septimius's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED.

acuteness, too, was piqued in trying to make out what manner of man he really was, and how much in him was genuine science and self-belief, and how much quackery and pretension and conscious empiricism. So he stayed, and supped with the doctor at a table heaped more bountifully, and with rarer dainties, than Septimius had ever before conceived of; and in his simpler cognizance, heretofore, of eating merely to live, he could not but wonder to see a man of thought caring to eat of more than one dish, so that most of the meal, on his part, was spent in seeing the doctor feed and hearing him discourse upon his food.

"If man lived only to eat," quoth the doctor, "one life would not suffice, not merely to exhaust the pleasure of it, but even to get the rudiments of it."

When this important business was over, the doctor and his guest sat down again in his laboratory, where the former took care to have his usual companion, the black bottle, at his elbow, and filled his pipe, and seemed to feel a certain sullen, genial, fierce, brutal, kindly mood enough, and looked at Septimius with a sort of friendship, as if he had as lief shake hands with him as knock him down.

"Now for a talk about business," said he.

Septimius thought, however, that the doctor's talk began, at least, at a sufficient remoteness from any practical business; for he began to question about his remote ancestry, what he knew, or what record had been preserved, of the first emigrant from England; whence, from what shire or part of England, that ancestor had come; whether there were any memorial of any kind remaining of him, any letters, or written documents, wills, deeds, or other legal papers; in short, all about him.

Septimius could not satisfactorily see whether these inquiries were made with any definite purpose, or from a mere general curiosity to discover how a family of early settlement in America might still be linked with the old country; whether there were any tendrils stretching across the gulf of a hundred and fifty years, by which the American branch of the family was separated from the trunk of the family tree in England. The doctor partly explained this.

"You must know," said he, "that the name you bear, Felton, is one formerly of much eminence and repute in my part of England, and, indeed, very recently possessed of wealth and station. I should like to know if you are of that race."

Septimius answered with such facts and traditions as had come to his knowledge respecting his family history; a sort of history that is quite as liable to be mythical, in its early and distant stages as that of Rome, and, indeed, seldom goes three or four generations back without getting into a mist really impenetrable, though great, gloomy, and magnificent shapes of men often seem to loom in it, who, if they could be brought close to the naked eye, would turn out as commonplace as the descendants who wonder at and admire them. He remembered Aunt Keziah's legend, and said he had reason to believe that his first ancestor came over at a somewhat earlier date than the first Puritan settlers, and dwelt among the Indians, where (and here the young man cast down his eyes, having the customary American abhorrence for any mixture of blood) he had intermarried with the daughter of a sagamore, and succeeded to his rule. This might have happened as early as the end of Elizabeth's reign, perhaps later. It was impossible to decide dates on such a matter. There had been a son of this connection, perhaps more than one, but certainly one son, who, on the arrival of the Puritans, was a youth, his father appearing to have been slain in some outbreak of the tribe, perhaps owing to the jealousy of prominent chiefs, at seeing their natural authority abrogated or absorbed by a man of different race. He slightly alluded to the supernatural attributes that gathered round this

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

predecessor, but in a way to imply that he put no faith in them; for Septimius's natural keen sense and perception kept him from betraying his weaknesses to the doctor, by the same instinctive and subtle caution with which a madman can so well conceal his infirmity.

On the arrival of the Puritans, they had found among the Indians a youth partly of their own blood, able, though imperfectly, to speak their language, — having at least some early recollections of it, — inheriting, also, a share of influence over the tribe on which his father had grafted him. It was natural that they should pay especial attention to this youth, consider it their duty to give him religious instruction in the faith of his fathers, and try to use him as a means of influencing his tribe. They did so, but did not succeed in swaying the tribe by his means, their success having been limited to winning the half-Indian from the wild ways of his mother's people, into a certain partial, but decent accommodation to those of the English. A tendency to civilization was brought out in his character by their rigid training; at least, his savage wildness was broken. He built a house among them, with a good deal of the wigwam, no doubt, in its style of architecture, but still a permanent house, near which he established a cornfield, a pumpkin-garden, a melon-patch, and became farmer enough to be entitled to ask the hand of a Puritan maiden. He spent his life, with some few instances of temporary relapse into savage wildness, when he fished in the river Musquehannah, or in Walden, or strayed in the woods, when he should have been planting or hoeing; but, on the whole, the race had been redeemed from barbarism in his person, and in the succeeding generations had been tamed more and more. The second generation had been distinguished in the Indian wars of the provinces, and then intermarried with the stock of a distinguished Puritan divine, by which means Septimius could reckon great and learned men, scholars of Old Cambridge, among his ancestry on one side, while on the other it ran up to the early emigrants, who seemed to have been remarkable men, and to that strange wild lineage of Indian chiefs, whose blood was like that of persons not quite human, intermixed with civilized blood.

"I wonder," said the doctor, musingly, "whether there are really no documents to ascertain the epoch at which that old first emigrant came over, and whence he came, and precisely from what English family. Often the last heir of some respectable name dies in England and we say that the family is extinct; whereas, very possibly, it may be abundantly flourishing in the New World, revived by the rich infusion of new blood in a new soil, instead of growing feebler, heavier, stupider, each year by sticking to an old soil, intermarrying over and over again with the same respectable families, till it has made common stock of all their vices, weaknesses, madnesses. Have you no documents, I say, no muniment deed?"

"None," said Septimius.

"No old furniture, desks, trunks, chests, cabinets?"

"You must remember," said Septimius, "that my Indian ancestor was not very likely to have brought such things out of the forest with him. A wandering Indian does not carry a chest of papers with him. I do remember, in my childhood, a little old iron-bound chest, or coffer, of which the key was lost, and which my Aunt Keziah used to say came down from her great-great-grandfather. I don't know what has become of it, and my poor old aunt kept it among her own treasures."

"Well, my friend, do you hunt up that old coffer, and, just as a matter of curiosity, let me see the contents."

"I have other things to do," said Septimius.

"Perhaps so," quoth the doctor, "but no other, as it may turn out, of quite so much importance as this. I 'll tell you fairly; the heir of a great English house is lately dead, and the estate

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lies open to any well-sustained, perhaps to any plausible claimant. If it should appear from the records of that family, as I have some reason to suppose, that a member of it, who would now represent the older branch, disappeared mysteriously and unaccountably, at a date corresponding with what might be ascertained as that of your ancestor's first appearance in this country; if any reasonable proof can be brought forward, on the part of the representatives of that white sagamore, that wizard pow-wow, or however you call him, that he was the disappearing Englishman, why, a good case is made out. Do you feel no interest in such a prospect?"

"Very little, I confess," said Septimius.

"Very little!" said the grim doctor, impatiently. "Do not you see that, if you make good your claim, you establish for yourself a position among the English aristocracy, and succeed to a noble English estate, an ancient hall, where your forefathers have dwelt since the Conqueror; splendid gardens, hereditary woods and parks, to which anything America can show is despicable, — all thoroughly cultivated and adorned, with the care and ingenuity of centuries; and an income, a month of which would be greater wealth than any of your American ancestors, raking and scraping for his lifetime, has ever got together, as the accumulated result of the toil and penury by which he has sacrificed body and soul?"

"That strain of Indian blood is in me yet," said Septimius, "and it makes me despise, — no, not despise; for I can see their desirableness for other people, — but it makes me reject for myself what you think so valuable. I do not care for these common aims. I have ambition, but it is for prizes such as other men cannot gain, and do not think of aspiring after. I could not live in the habits of English life, as I conceive it to be, and would not for my part be burthened with the great estate you speak of. It might answer my purpose for a time. It would suit me well enough to try that mode of life, as well as a hundred others, but only for a time. It is of no permanent importance."

"I 'll tell you what it is, young man," said the doctor, testily, "you have something in your brain that makes you talk very foolishly; and I have partly a suspicion what it is, — only I can't think that a fellow who is really gifted with respectable sense, in other directions, should be such a confounded idiot in this."

Septimius blushed, but held his peace, and the conversation languished after this; the doctor grimly smoking his pipe, and by no means increasing the milkiness of his mood by frequent applications to the black bottle, until Septimius intimated that he would like to go to bed. The old woman was summoned, and ushered him to his chamber.

At breakfast, the doctor partially renewed the subject which he seemed to consider most important in yesterday's conversation.

"My young friend," said he, "I advise you to look in cellar and garret, or wherever you consider the most likely place, for that iron-bound coffer. There may be nothing in it; it may be full of musty love-letters, or old sermons, or receipted bills of a hundred years ago; but it may contain what will be worth to you an estate of five thousand pounds a year. It is a pity the old woman with the damnable decoction is gone off. Look it up, I say."

"Well, well," said Septimius, abstractedly, "when I can find time."

So saying, he took his leave, and retraced his way back to his home. He had not seemed like himself during the time that elapsed since he left it, and it appeared an infinite space that he had lived through and travelled over, and he fancied it hardly possible that he could ever get back again. But now, with every step that he took, he found himself getting miserably back into the old enchanted land. The mist rose up about him, the pale mist-bow of ghostly promise curved before him; and he trod back again, poor boy, out of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

clime of real effort, into the land of his dreams and shadowy enterprise.

"How was it," said he, "that I can have been so untrue to my convictions? Whence came that dark and dull despair that weighed upon me? Why did I let the mocking mood which I was conscious of in that brutal, brandy-burnt sceptic have such an influence on me? Let him guzzle! He shall not tempt me from my pursuit, with his lure of an estate and name among those heavy English beef-eaters of whom he is a brother. My destiny is one which kings might envy, and strive in vain to buy with principalities and kingdoms."

So he trod on air almost, in the latter parts of his journey, and, instead of being wearied, grew more airy with the latter miles that brought him to his wayside home.

So now Septimius sat down, and began in earnest his endeavors and experiments to prepare the medicine, according to the mysterious terms of the recipe. It seemed not possible to do it, so many rebuffs and disappointments did he meet with. No effort would produce a combination answering to the description of the recipe, which propounded a brilliant, gold-colored liquid, clear as the air itself, with a certain fragrance which was peculiar to it, and also, what was the more individual test of the correctness of the mixture, a certain coldness of the feeling, a chillness which was described as peculiarly refreshing and invigorating. With all his trials he produced nothing but turbid results, clouded generally, or lacking something in color, and never that fragrance and never that coldness which was to be the test of truth. He studied all the books of chemistry which at that period were attainable, — a period when, in the world, it was a science far unlike what it has since become; and when Septimius had no instruction in this country, nor could obtain any beyond the dark, mysterious, charlatanic communications of Doctor Portsoaken. So that, in fact, he seemed to be discovering for himself the science through which he was to work. He seemed to do everything that was stated in the recipe, and yet no results came from it; the liquid that he produced was nauseous to the smell, — to taste it he had a horrible repugnance, — turbid, nasty, reminding him in most respects of poor Aunt Keziah's elixir; and it was a body without a soul, and that body dead. And so it went on; and the poor, half-maddened Septimius began to think that his immortal life was preserved by the mere effort of seeking for it, but was to be spent in the quest, and was therefore to be made an eternity of abortive misery. He pored over the document that had so possessed him, turning its crabbed meanings every way, trying to get out of it some new light, often tempted to fling it into the fire which he kept under his retort, and let the whole thing go; but then again, soon rising out of that black depth of despair, into a determination to do what he had so long striven for. With such intense action of mind as he brought to bear on this paper, it is wonderful that it was not spiritually distilled; that its essence did not arise, purified from all alloy of falsehood, from all turbidness of obscurity and ambiguity, and from a pure essence of truth and invigorating motive, if of any it were capable. In this interval, Septimius is said by tradition to have found out many wonderful secrets that were almost beyond the scope of science. It was said that old Aunt Keziah used to come with a coal of fire from unknown furnaces, to light his distilling apparatus; it was said, too, that the ghost of the old lord, whose ingenuity had propounded this puzzle for his descendants, used to come at midnight and strive to explain to him this manuscript; that the Black Man, too, met him on the hill-top, and promised him an immediate release from his difficulties, provided he would kneel down and worship him, and sign his name in his book, an old, iron-clasped, much-worn volume, which he produced from his ample pockets, and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

showed him in it the names of many a man whose name has become historic, and above whose ashes kept watch an inscription testifying to his virtues and devotion, — old autographs, — for the Black Man was the original autograph-collector.

But these, no doubt, were foolish stories, conceived and propagated in chimney-corners, while yet there were chimney-corners and firesides, and smoky flues. There was no truth in such things, I am sure; the Black Man had changed his tactics, and knew better than to lure the human soul thus to come to him with his musty autograph-book. So Septimius fought with his difficulty by himself, as many a beginner in science has done before him; and to his efforts in this way are popularly attributed many herb-drinks, and some kinds of spruce-beer, and nostrums used for rheumatism, sore throat, and typhus fever; but I rather think they all came from Aunt Keziah; or perhaps, like jokes to Joe Miller, all sorts of quack medicines, flocking at large through the community, are assigned to him or her. The people have a little mistaken the character and purpose of poor Septimius, and remember him as a quack doctor, instead of a seeker for a secret, not the less sublime and elevating because it happened to be unattainable.

I know not through what medium, or by what means, but it got noised abroad that Septimius was engaged in some mysterious work; and, indeed, his seclusion, his absorption, his indifference to all that was going on in that weary time of war, looked strange enough to indicate that it must be some most important business that engrossed him. On the few occasions when he came out from his immediate haunts into the village, he had a strange, owl-like appearance, uncombed, unbrushed, his hair long and tangled; his face, they said, darkened with smoke; his cheeks pale; the indentation of his brow deeper than ever before; an earnest, haggard, sulking look; and so he went hastily along the village street, feeling as if all eyes might find out what he had in his mind from his appearance; taking by-ways where they were to be found, going long distances through woods and fields, rather than short ones where the way lay through the frequented haunts of men. For he shunned the glances of his fellow-men, probably because he had learnt to consider them not as fellows, because he was seeking to withdraw himself from the common bond and destiny, — because he felt, too, that on that account his fellow-men would consider him as a traitor, an enemy, one who deserted their cause, and tried to withdraw his feeble shoulder from under that great burthen of death which is imposed on all men to bear, and which, if one could escape, each other would feel his load proportionably heavier. With these beings of a moment he had no longer any common cause; they must go their separate ways, yet apparently the same, — they on the broad, dusty, beaten path, that seemed always full, but from which continually they so strangely vanished into invisibility, no one knowing, nor long inquiring, what had become of them; he on his lonely path, where he should tread secure, with no trouble but the loneliness which would be none to him. For a little while he would seem to keep them company, but soon they would all drop away, the minister, his accustomed townspeople, Robert Hagburn, Rose, Sybil Dacy, — all leaving him in blessed unknownness to adopt new temporary relations, and take a new course.

Sometimes, however, the prospect a little chilled him. Could he give them all up, — the sweet sister; the friend of his childhood; the grave instructor of his youth; the homely life-known faces? Yes; there were such rich possibilities in the future: for he would seek out the noblest minds, the deepest hearts in every age, and be the friend of human[ity in all] time. Only it might be sweet to have one unchangeable companion; for, unless he strung the pearls and diamonds of life upon one unbroken affection, he sometimes thought

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that his life would have nothing to give it unity and identity; and so the longest life would be but an aggregate of insulated fragments, which would have no relation to one another. And so it would not be one life, but many unconnected ones. Unless he could look into the same eyes, through the mornings of future time, opening and blessing him with the fresh gleam of love and joy; unless the same sweet voice could melt his thoughts together; unless some sympathy of a life side by side with his could knit them into one; looking back upon the same things, looking forward to the same; the long, thin thread of an individual life, stretching onward and onward, would cease to be visible, cease to be felt, cease, by and by, to have any real bigness in proportion to its length, and so be virtually non-existent, except in the mere inconsiderable Now. If a group of chosen friends, chosen out of all the world for their adaptedness, could go on in endless life together, keeping themselves mutually warm on the high, desolate way, then none of them need ever sigh to be comforted in the pitiable snugness of the grave. If one especial soul might be his companion, then how complete the fence of mutual arms, the warmth of close-pressing breast to breast! Might there be one! O, Sybil Dacy!

Perhaps it could not be. Who but himself could undergo that great trial, and hardship, and self-denial, and firm purpose, never wavering, never sinking for a moment, keeping his grasp on life like one who holds up by main force a sinking and drowning friend? — how could a woman do it! He must then give up the thought. There was a choice, — friendship, and the love of woman, — the long life of immortality. There was something heroic and ennobling in choosing the latter. And so he walked with the mysterious girl on the hill-top, and sat down beside her on the grave, which still ceased not to redden, portentously beautiful, with that unnatural flower, — and they talked together; and Septimius looked on her weird beauty, and often said to himself, "This, too, will pass away; she is not capable of what I am, she is a woman. It must be a manly and courageous and forcible spirit, vastly rich in all three particulars, that has strength enough to live! Ah, is it surely so? There is such a dark sympathy between us, she knows me so well, she touches my inmost so at unawares, that I could almost think I had a companion here. Perhaps not so soon. At the end of centuries I might wed one; not now."

But once he said to Sybil Dacy, "Ah, how sweet it would be — sweet for me, at least — if this intercourse might last forever!"

"That is an awful idea that you present," said Sybil, with a hardly perceptible, involuntary shudder; "always on this hill-top, always passing and repassing this little hillock, always smelling these flowers! I always looking at this deep chasm in your brow; you always seeing my bloodless cheek! — doing this till these trees crumble away, till perhaps a new forest grew up wherever this white race had planted, and a race of savages again possess the soil. I should not like it. My mission here is but for a short time, and will soon be accomplished, and then I go."

"You do not rightly estimate the way in which the long time might be spent," said Septimius. "We would find out a thousand uses of this world, uses and enjoyments which now men never dream of, because the world is just held to their mouths, and then snatched away again, before they have time hardly to taste it, instead of becoming acquainted with the deliciousness of this great world-fruit. But you speak of a mission, and as if you were now in performance of it. Will you not tell me what it is?"

"No," said Sybil Dacy, smiling on him. "But one day you shall know what it is, — none sooner nor better than you, — so much I promise you."

"Are we friends?" asked Septimius, somewhat puzzled by her look.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"We have an intimate relation to one another," replied Sybil.

"And what is it?" demanded Septimius.

"That will appear hereafter," answered Sybil, again smiling on him.

He knew not what to make of this, nor whether to be exalted or depressed; but, at all events, there seemed to be an accordance, a striking together, a mutual touch of their two natures, as if, somehow or other, they were performing the same part of solemn music; so that he felt his soul thrill, and at the same time shudder. Some sort of sympathy there surely was, but of what nature he could not tell; though often he was impelled to ask himself the same question he asked Sybil, "Are we friends?" because of a sudden shock and repulsion that came between them, and passed away in a moment; and there would be Sybil, smiling askance on him.

And then he toiled away again at his chemical pursuits; tried to mingle things harmoniously that apparently were not born to be mingled; discovering a science for himself, and mixing it up with absurdities that other chemists had long ago flung aside; but still there would be that turbid aspect, still that lack of fragrance, still that want of the peculiar temperature, that was announced as the test of the matter. Over and over again he set the crystal vase in the sun, and let it stay there the appointed time, hoping that it would digest in such a manner as to bring about the desired result.

One day, as it happened, his eyes fell upon the silver key which he had taken from the breast of the dead young man, and he thought within himself that this might have something to do with the seemingly unattainable success of his pursuit. He remembered, for the first time, the grim doctor's emphatic injunction to search for the little iron-bound box of which he had spoken, and which had come down with such legends attached to it; as, for instance, that it held the Devil's bond with his great-great-grandfather, now cancelled by the surrender of the latter's soul; that it held the golden key of Paradise; that it was full of old gold, or of the dry leaves of a hundred years ago; that it had a familiar friend in it, who would be exorcised by the turning of the lock, but would otherwise remain a prisoner till the solid oak of the box mouldered, or the iron rusted away; so that between fear and the loss of the key, this curious old box had remained unopened, till itself was lost.

But now Septimius, putting together what Aunt Keziah had said in her dying moments, and what Doctor Portsoaken had insisted upon, suddenly came to the conclusion that the possession of the old iron box might be of the greatest importance to him. So he set himself at once to think where he had last seen it. Aunt Keziah, of course, had put it away in some safe place or other, either in cellar or garret, no doubt; so Septimius, in the intervals of his other occupations, devoted several days to the search; and, not to weary the reader with the particulars of the quest for an old box, suffice it to say that he at last found it, amongst various other antique rubbish, in a corner of the garret.

It was a very rusty old thing, not more than a foot in length, and half as much in height and breadth; but most ponderously iron-bound, with bars and corners, and all sorts of fortification; looking very much like an ancient alms-box, such as are to be seen in the older rural churches of England, and which seem to intimate great distrust of those to whom the funds are committed. Indeed, there might be a shrewd suspicion that some ancient church-beadle among Septimius's forefathers, when emigrating from England, had taken the opportunity of bringing the poor-box along with him. On looking close, too, there were rude embellishments on the lid and sides of the box in long-rusted steel, designs such as the Middle Ages were rich in; a representation of Adam and Eve, or of Satan and a soul, nobody could tell which; but at any rate, an illustration of great value

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and interest. Septimius looked at this ugly, rusty, ponderous old box, so worn and battered with time, and recollected with a scornful smile the legends of which it was the object; all of which he despised and discredited, just as much as he did that story in the "Arabian Nights," where a demon comes out of a copper vase, in a cloud of smoke that covers the sea-shore; for he was singularly invulnerable to all modes of superstition, all nonsense, except his own.. But that one mode was ever in full force and operation with him. He felt strongly convinced that inside the old box was something that appertained to his destiny; the key that he had taken from the dead man's breast, had that come down through time, and across the sea, and had a man died to bring and deliver it to him, merely for nothing? It could not be.

He looked at the old, rusty, elaborated lock of the little receptacle. It was much flourished about with what was once polished steel; and certainly, when thus polished, and the steel bright with which it was hooped, defended, and inlaid, it must have been a thing fit to appear in any cabinet; though now the oak was worm-eaten as an old coffin, and the rust of the iron came off red on Septimius's fingers, after he had been fumbling at it. He looked at the curious old silver key too, and fancied that he discovered in its elaborate handle some likeness to the ornaments about the box; at any rate, this he determined was the key of fate, and he was just applying it to the lock, when somebody tapped familiarly at the door, having opened the outer one, and stepped in with a manly stride. Septimius, inwardly blaspheming, as secluded men are apt to do when any interruption comes, and especially when it comes at some critical moment of projection, left the box as yet unbroached, and said, "Come in."

The door opened, and Robert Hagburn entered; looking so tall and stately, that Septimius hardly knew him for the youth with whom he had grown up familiarly. He had on the Revolutionary dress of buff and blue, with decorations that to the initiated eye denoted him an officer, and certainly there was a kind of authority in his look and manner, indicating that heavy responsibilities, critical moments, had educated him, and turned the ploughboy into a man.

"Is it you?" exclaimed Septimius. "I scarcely knew you. How war has altered you!"

"And I may say, Is it you? for you are much altered likewise, my old friend. Study wears upon you terribly. You will be an old man, at this rate, before you know you are a young one. You will kill yourself, as sure as a gun!"

"Do you think so?" said Septimius, rather startled, for the queer absurdity of the position struck him, if he should so exhaust and wear himself as to die, just at the moment when he should have found out the secret of everlasting life. "But though I look pale, I am very vigorous. Judging from that scar, slanting down from your temple, you have been nearer death than you now think me, though in another way."

"Yes," said Robert Hagburn; "but in hot blood, and for a good cause, who cares for death? And yet I love life; none better, while it lasts, and I love it in all its looks and turns and surprises; — there is so much to be got out of it, in spite of all that people say. Youth is sweet, with its fiery enterprise, and I suppose mature manhood will be just as much so, though in a calmer way, and age, quieter still, will have its own merits; — the thing is only to do with life what we ought, and what is suited to each of its stages; do all, enjoy all, — and I suppose these two rules amount to the same thing. Only catch real earnest hold of life, not play with it, and not defer one part of it for the sake of another, then each part of life will do for us what was intended. People talk of the hardships of military service, of the miseries that we undergo fighting for our country. I have undergone

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

my share, I believe, — hard toil in the wilderness, hunger, extreme weariness, pinching cold, the torture of a wound, peril of death; and really I have been as happy through it as ever I was at my mother's cosey fireside of a winter's evening. If I had died, I doubt not my last moments would have been happy. There is no use of life, but just to find out what is fit for us to do; and, doing it, it seems to be little matter whether we live or die in it. God does not want our work, but only our willingness to work; at least, the last seems to answer all his purposes."

"This is a comfortable philosophy of yours," said Septimius, rather contemptuously, and yet enviously. "Where did you get it, Robert?"

"Where? Nowhere; it came to me on the march; and though I can't say that I thought it when the bullets pattered into the snow about me, in those narrow streets of Quebec, yet, I suppose, it was in my mind then; for, as I tell you, I was very cheerful and contented. And you, Septimius? I never saw such a discontented, unhappy-looking fellow as you are. You have had a harder time in peace than I in war. You have not found what you seek, whatever that may be. Take my advice. Give yourself to the next work that comes to hand. The war offers place to all of us; we ought to be thankful, — the most joyous of all the generations before or after us, — since Providence gives us such good work to live for, or such a good opportunity to die. It is worth living for, just to have the chance to die so well as a man may in these days. Come, be a soldier. Be a chaplain, since your education lies that way; and you will find that nobody in peace prays so well as we do, we soldiers; and you shall not be debarred from fighting, too; if war is holy work, a priest may lawfully do it, as well as pray for it. Come with us, my old friend Septimius, be my comrade, and, whether you live or die, you will thank me for getting you out of the yellow forlornness in which you go on, neither living nor dying."

Septimius looked at Robert Hagburn in surprise; so much was he altered and improved by this brief experience of war, adventure, responsibility, which he had passed through. Not less than the effect produced on his loutish, rustic air and deportment, developing his figure, seeming to make him taller, setting free the manly graces that lurked within his awkward frame, — not less was the effect on his mind and moral nature, giving freedom of ideas, simple perception of great thoughts, a free natural chivalry; so that the knight, the Homeric warrior, the hero, seemed to be here, or possible to be here, in the young New England rustic; and all that history has given, and hearts throbbed and sighed and gloried over, of patriotism and heroic feeling and action, might be repeated, perhaps, in the life and death of this familiar friend and playmate of his, whom he had valued not over highly, — Robert Hagburn. He had merely followed out his natural heart, boldly and singly, — doing the first good thing that came to hand, — and here was a hero.

"You almost make me envy you, Robert," said he, sighing.

"Then why not come with me?" asked Robert.

"Because I have another destiny," said Septimius.

"Well, you are mistaken; be sure of that," said Robert. "This is not a generation for study, and the making of books; that may come by and by. This great fight has need of all men to carry it on, in one way or another; and no man will do well, even for himself, who tries to avoid his share in it. But I have said my say. And now, Septimius, the war takes much of a man, but it does not take him all, and what it leaves is all the more full of life and health thereby. I have something to say to you about this."

"Say it then, Robert," said Septimius, who, having got over the first excitement of the interview, and the sort

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of exhilaration produced by the healthful glow of Robert's spirit, began secretly to wish that it might close, and to be permitted to return to his solitary thoughts again. "What can I do for you?"

"Why, nothing," said Robert, looking rather confused, "since all is settled. The fact is, my old friend, as perhaps you have seen, I have very long had an eye upon your sister Rose; yes, from the time we went together to the old school-house, where she now teaches children like what we were then. The war took me away, and in good time, — for I doubt if Rose would ever have cared enough for me to be my wife, if I had stayed at home, a country lout, as I was getting to be, in shirt-sleeves and bare feet. But now, you see, I have come back, and this whole great war, to her woman's heart, is represented in me, and makes me heroic, so to speak, and strange, and yet her old familiar lover. So I found her heart tenderer for me than it was; and, in short, Rose has consented to be my wife, and we mean to be married in a week: my furlough permits little delay."

"You surprise me," said Septimius, who, immersed in his own pursuits, had taken no notice of the growing affection between Robert and his sister. "Do you think it well to snatch this little lull that is allowed you in the wild striving of war to try to make a peaceful home? Shall you like to be summoned from it soon? Shall you be as cheerful among dangers afterwards, when one sword may cut down two happinesses?"

"There is something in what you say, and I have thought of it," said Robert, sighing. "But I can't tell how it is; but there is something in this uncertainty, this peril, this cloud before us, that makes it sweeter to love and to be loved than amid all seeming quiet and serenity. Really, I think, if there were to be no death, the beauty of life would be all tame. So we take our chance, or our dispensation of Providence, and are going to love, and to be married, just as confidently as if we were sure of living forever."

"Well, old fellow," said Septimius, with more cordiality and outgush of heart than he had felt for a long while, "there is no man whom I should be happier to call brother. Take Rose, and all happiness along with her. She is a good girl, and not in the least like me. May you live out your threescore years and ten, and every one of them be happy."

Little more passed, and Robert Hagburn took his leave with a hearty shake of Septimius's hand, too conscious of his own happiness to be quite sensible how much the latter was self-involved, strange, anxious, separated from healthy life and interests; and Septimius, as soon as Robert had disappeared, locked the door behind him, and proceeded at once to apply the silver key to the lock of the old strong box.

The lock resisted somewhat, being rusty, as might well be supposed after so many years since it was opened; but it finally allowed the key to turn, and Septimius, with a good deal of flutter at his heart, opened the lid. The interior had a very different aspect from that of the exterior; for, whereas the latter looked so old, this, having been kept from the air, looked about as new as when shut up from light and air two centuries ago, less or more. It was lined with ivory, beautifully carved in figures, according to the art which the mediæval people possessed in great perfection; and probably the box had been a lady's jewel-casket formerly, and had glowed with rich lustre and bright colors at former openings. But now there was nothing in it of that kind, — nothing in keeping with those figures carved in the ivory representing some mythical subjects, — nothing but some papers in the bottom of the box written over in an ancient hand, which Septimius at once fancied that he recognized as that of the manuscript and recipe which he had found on the breast of the young soldier. He eagerly seized them, but was infinitely disappointed to find that

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they did not seem to refer at all to the subjects treated by the former, but related to pedigrees and genealogies, and were in reference to an English family and some member of it who, two centuries before, had crossed the sea to America, and who, in this way, had sought to preserve his connection with his native stock, so as to be able, perhaps, to prove it for himself or his descendants; and there was reference to documents and records in England in confirmation of the genealogy. Septimius saw that this paper had been drawn up by an ancestor of his own, the unfortunate man who had been hanged for witchcraft; but so earnest had been his expectation of something different, that he flung the old papers down with bitter indifference.

Then again he snatched them up, and contemptuously read them, — those proofs of descent through generations of esquires and knights, who had been renowned in war; and there seemed, too, to be running through the family a certain tendency to letters, for three were designated as of the colleges of Oxford or Cambridge; and against one there was the note, "he that sold himself to Sathan"; and another seemed to have been a follower of Wickliffe; and they had murdered kings, and been beheaded, and banished, and what not; so that the age-long life of this ancient family had not been, after all, a happy or very prosperous one, though they had kept their estate in one or another descendant, since the Conquest. It was not wholly without interest that Septimius saw that this ancient descent, this connection with noble families, and intermarriages with names, some of which he recognized as known in English history, all referred to his own family, and seemed to centre in himself, the last of a poverty-stricken line, which had dwindled down into obscurity, and into rustic labor and humble toil, reviving in him a little; yet how little, unless he fulfilled his strange purpose! Was it not better worth his while to take this English position here so strangely offered him? He had apparently slain unwittingly the only person who could have contested his rights, — the young man who had so strangely brought him the hope of unlimited life at the same time that he was making room for him among his forefathers. What a change in his lot would have been here, for there seemed to be some pretensions to a title, too, from a barony which was floating about and occasionally moving out of abeyancy!

"Perhaps," said Septimius to himself, "I may hereafter think it worth while to assert my claim to these possessions, to this position amid an ancient aristocracy, and try that mode of life for one generation. Yet there is something in my destiny incompatible, of course, with the continued possession of an estate. I must be, of necessity, a wanderer on the face of the earth, changing place at short intervals, disappearing suddenly and entirely; else the foolish, short-lived multitude and mob of mortals will be enraged with one who seems their brother, yet whose countenance will never be furrowed with his age, nor his knees totter, nor his force be abated; their little brevity will be rebuked by his age-long endurance, above whom the oaken roof-tree of a thousand years would crumble, while still he would be hale and strong. So that this house, or any other, would be but a resting-place of a day, and then I must away into another obscurity."

Nathaniel Hawthorne.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE SONG OF ROREK.

'TWAS on the night of Michaelmas that lordly Orloff's heir
Wed with the noble Russian maid, Dimitry's daughter fair.

With mirth and song, and love and wine, that was a royal day;
The banners streamed, the halls were hung in black and gold array.

The Twelve Apostles stood in brass, each with a flambeau bright,
To blaze with holy altar sheen throughout the festive night.

The rings were changed, the tabor rolled, the Kyrie was said;
The boyard father drew his sword, and pierced the loaf of bread.

Soon as the priest did drain his cup, and put his pipe aside,
He wiped his lip upon his sleeve, and kissed the blushing bride.

That very night to Novgorod must hasten bride and heir,
And Count Dimitry bid them well with robe and bell prepare.

And when from feast and wedding-guest they parted at the door,
He bade two hunters ride behind, two hunters ride before.

"Look to your carbines, men," he called, "and gird your ready knives."
With one accord they all replied, "We pledge thee with our lives!"

I was the haiduk of that night, and vowed, by horses fleet,
Our sleigh must shoot with arrow speed behind the coursers' feet.

We journeyed speedy, werst by werst, with bell and song and glee,
And I, upon my postal-horn, blew many a melody.

I blew farewell to Minka mine, and bid the strain retire
Where she sat winding flaxen thread beside the kitchen fire.

We rode, and rode, by hollow pass, by glen and mountain-side,
And with each bell soft accents fell from lips of bonny bride.

The night was drear, the night was chill, the night was lone and bright;
Before us streamed the polar rays in green and golden light.

The gypsy thieves were in their dens; the owl moaned in the trees;
The wind-mill circled merrily, obedient to the breeze.

Shrill piped the blast in birchen boughs, and mocked the snowy shroud,
Thrice ran a hare across our track; thrice croaked a raven loud!

The horses pawed the frigid sands, and drove them with the wind;
We left the village gallows-tree full thirty wersts behind.

We rode, and rode, by forest shade, by brake and river-side;
And as we rode I heard the kiss of groom and bonny bride.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I heard again, — a boding strain ; I heard it, all too well ;
A neigh, a shout, a groan, a howl, — then heavy curses fell.

Our horses pricked their wary ears, and bounded with affright ;
From forest kennels picket wolves were baying in the night.

" Haiduk, haiduk, — the lash, — the steeds, — the wolves ! — " the lady cried ;
The wily baron clutched his blade, and murmured to the bride : —

" This all is but a moonlight hunt ; the starveling hounds shall bleed,
And you shall be the tourney's queen, to crown the gallant deed ! "

The moon it crept behind a cloud, as covered by a storm ;
And the gray cloud became a wolf, a monster wolf in form.

" Gramercy, Mother of our Lord, — gramercy in our needs ! "
Hold well together hand and thong, — hold well, ye sturdy steeds !

Like unto Tartar cavalry the wolf battalion sped ;
Ungunned, unspurred, but well to horse, and sharpened well to head.

The pines stood by, the stars looked on, and listless fell the snow ;
The breeze made merry with the trees, nor heeded wolf nor woe.

Now cracked the carbines, — bleeding beasts were rolling here and there ;
'T was flash and shot and howl, — and yet the wolves were everywhere.

No more they mustered in our wake, their legion ranged beside.
'T was steed for speed, and wolf for steed, and wolf for lord and bride.

In vain I cited Christian saints, I called Mahomet near ;
Methought though all the saints did fail, the Prophet would appear.

A moment, and pursuit is stayed, — they tear their wounded kind ;
A moment, — then the hellish pack did follow close behind.

The baron silent rose amain, by danger unappalled.
" Strive for your lives, with guns and knives," the mounted guardsmen called.

The lady muttered agony, with crucifix and beads ;
The wolves were snapping by her side, and leaping at our steeds.

My limbs were numb, my senses dumb, nor reason held its place ;
I fell beneath two glaring orbs, within a gaunt embrace.

I roused to hear a volley fired, to hear a martial shout ;
And when I oped my stricken eyes the wolves were all to rout.

A hundred scouting Cossacks met and slew the deadly foe ;
Fourscore of wolves in throes of death lay bleeding in the snow.

Our lady rested in a swoon, our lord was stained with gore ;
But none could tell of what befell the trusty hunters four.

John W. Weidemeyer.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW WRINKLE AT SWEETBRIER;

OR, THE DRAMA IN COLLEGES.

I HAVE been distressed, dear Fastidiosus, by your remonstrance concerning the performance at our college at Sweetbrier of a "stage play." You have heard the facts rightly; that it was given under the superintendence of the English professor, the evening before Commencement, "with many of the accessories of a theatre." You urge that it is unprecedented to have at a dignified institution, which aims at a high standard, under the superintendence of a professor, such a performance; that it excites the prejudices of some people against us; and you quote the sharp remarks of "David's Harp," the organ of the Dunkers. You urge that such things can be nothing more than the play of boys and girls, and are something worse than mere waste of time, for they set young people to thinking of the theatre, which is irretrievably sunk and only harmful. In your character of trustee, you are sorry it has been done, and beg that it may not be done again.

I beg you to listen to a patient stating of the case. It is not without precedent. When you were at Worms, in Germany, do you remember in the Luther memorial the superb figure of Reuchlin, on one of the outer corners? One or two of the statues may be somewhat grander, but no other seemed to me so handsome, as it stood colossal on its pillar, the scholar's gown falling from the stately shoulders, and the face so fine there in the bronze, under the abundant hair and cap. Reuchlin is said to be the proper founder of the German drama. Before his time there had been, to be sure, some performing of miracle-plays, and perhaps things of a different sort. The German literary historians, however, make it an era when Reuchlin came as professor to Heidelberg, and, in 1497, set up a stage, with students for actors, at the house of Johann, Kämmerer von Dalberg. He wrote his plays in Latin. If you wish, I can send you their titles. Each act, probably, was prefaced by a synopsis in German, and soon translations came into vogue, and were performed as well. On that little strip of level which the crags and the Neckar make so narrow, collected then, as now, a fair concourse of bounding youth. One can easily fancy how, when the prototypes of the trim Burschen of to-day stepped out in their representation, the applause sounded across to the vineyards about the Heiligenberg and Hirschgasse, and how now and then a knight and a dame from the court of the Kurfürst came down the Schlossberg to see it all. What Reuchlin began, came by no means to a speedy end. In the Jesuit seminaries in Germany, in Italy too, and elsewhere, as the Reformation came on, I find the boys were acting plays. This feature in the school was held out as an attraction to win students; and in Prague the fathers themselves wrote dramas to satirize the Protestants, introducing Luther as the comic figure. But what occurred in the Protestant world was more noteworthy. As the choral singing of the schoolboys affected in an important way the development of music, so the school-plays had much to do with the development of the drama. Read Gervinus to see how for a century or two it was the schools and universities that remained true to a tolerably high standard, while in the world at large all nobler ideals were under eclipse. It was jocund Luther himself who took it under his especial sanction, as he did the fiddle and the dance, in his sweet large-heartedness finding Scriptural precedents for it, and encouraging the youths who came trooping to Wittenberg to relieve their wrestling with Aristotle and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the dreary controversy with an occasional play. Melancthon, too, gave the practice encouragement, until not only Wittenberg, but the schools of Saxony in general, and Thuringia, whose hills were in sight, surpassed all the countries of Germany in their attention to plays. In Leipsic, Erfurt, and Magdeburg comedies were regularly represented before the schoolmasters. But it was at the University of Strasburg, even at the time when the unsmiling Calvin was seeking asylum there, that the dramatic life of the German seminaries found a splendid culmination. Yearly, in the academic theatre, took place a series of representations, by students, of marvellous pomp and elaboration. The school and college plays were of various character. Sometimes they were from Terence, Plautus, or Aristophanes; sometimes modifications of the ancient mysteries, meant to enforce the Evangelical theology; sometimes comedies full of the contemporary life. There are several men that have earned mention in the history of German literature by writing plays for students. The representations became a principal means for celebrating great occasions. If special honor was to be done to a festival, or a princely visit was expected, the market-place, the Rathhaus, or the church was prepared, and it was the professor's or the schoolmaster's duty to direct the boys in their performance of a play. We get glimpses, in the chronicles, of the circumstances under which the representations took place. The magistrates, even the courts, lent brilliant dresses. One old writer laments that the ignorant people have so little sense for arts of this kind. "Often tumult and mocking are heard, for it is the greatest joy to the rabble if the spectators fall down through broken benches." The old three-storied stage of the mysteries was often retained, with heaven above, earth in the middle space, and hell below; where, according to the stage direction of the "Golden Legend," "the devils walked about and made a great noise." "Lazarus" is described as represented in the sixteenth century before a hotel, before which sat the rich man carousing, while Abraham, in a parson's coat, looked out of an upper window. This rudeness, however, belongs rather to the "Volks-comödie" than the "Schul-comödie," whose adjuncts were generally far more rational, and sometimes even brilliant, as in the Strasburg representations. It was only in the seminaries that art was preserved from utter decay. One may trace the Schul-comödie until far down in the eighteenth century, and in the last mention I find of it appears an interesting figure. In 1780, at the military school in Stuttgard, the birthday of the Duke of Würtemberg was celebrated by a performance of Goethe's "Clavigo." The leading part was taken by a youth of twenty-one, with high cheek-bones, a broad, low, Greek brow above straight eyebrows, a prominent nose, and lips nervous with an extraordinary energy. The German narrator says he played the part "abominably, shrieking, roaring, unmannerly to a laughable degree." It was the young Schiller, wild as a Pythoness upon her tripod, with the "Robbers," which became famous in the following year.

But I do not mean, Fastidiosus, to cite only German precedents, nor to uphold the college drama with the names of Reuchlin, Melancthon, and Luther alone, majestic though they are. In the University of Paris the custom of acting plays was one of high antiquity. In 1392 the school-boys of Angiers performed "Robin and Marian," "as was their annual custom"; and in 1477 the scholars of Pontoise represented "a certain moralitie or farce, as is their custom." In 1558 the comedies of Jacques Grévin were acted at the College of Beauvais at Paris; but it is in the next century that we come upon the most interesting case. In the days of Louis XIV. the girls' school at St. Cyr, of which Madame de Maintenon was patroness, was, in one way and another, the object of much public attention. Mademoiselle

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

de Caylus, niece of Madame de Maintenon, who became famous among the women of charming wit and grace who distinguished the time, was a pupil at St. Cyr, and in her memoirs gives a pleasant sketch of her school life. With the rest, "Madame de Brinon," she says, "first superior of St. Cyr, loved verse and the drama; and in default of the pieces of Corneille and Racine, which she did not dare to have represented, she composed plays herself. It is to her, and her taste for the stage, that the world owes 'Esther' and 'Athalie,' which Racine wrote for the girls of St. Cyr. Madame de Maintenon wished to see one of Madame de Brinon's pieces. She found it such as it was, that is to say, so bad that she begged to have no more such played, and that instead some beautiful piece of Corneille or Racine should be selected, choosing such as contained least about love. These young girls, therefore, undertook the rendering of 'Cinna,' quite passably for children who had been trained for the stage only by an old nun. They then played 'Andromaque'; and, whether it was that the actresses were better chosen, or gained in grace through experience, it was only too well represented for Madame de Maintenon, causing her to fear that this amusement would fill them with sentiments the reverse of those which she wished to inspire. However, as she was persuaded that amusements of this sort were good for youth, she wrote to Racine, begging him to compose for her, in his moments of leisure, some sort of moral or historic poem, from which love should be entirely banished, and in which he need not believe that his reputation was concerned, since it would remain buried at St. Cyr. The letter threw Racine into great agitation. He wished to please Madame de Maintenon. To refuse was impossible for a courtier, and the commission was delicate for a man who, like him, had a great reputation to sustain. At last he found in the subject of Esther all that was necessary to please the Court." So far Mademoiselle de Caylus. A French historian of literature draws a pleasing picture of the old Racine superintending the preparation of "Esther," "giving advice full of sense and taste on the manner of reciting his verses, never breaking their harmony by a vulgar diction, nor hurting the sense by a wrong emphasis. What a charm must the verses where Esther recounts the history of her triumph over her rivals have had in the mouth of Mademoiselle de Veillanne, the prettiest and most graceful of the pupils of St. Cyr! How grand he must have been, when, with that noble figure which Louis XIV. admired, he taught Mademoiselle de Glapion, whose voice went to the heart, to declaim the beautiful verses of the part of Mordecai!" The genius of Racine glows finely in "Esther." In the choruses the inspirations of the Hebrew prophets, framed as it were in a Greek mould, give impressive relief to the dialogue, as in Sophocles and Æschylus. It was played several times, and no favor was more envied at the Court than an invitation to the representations. The literature of the time has many allusions to them. The splendid world, in all its lace and powder, crowded to the quiet convent. The great soldiers, the wits, the beautiful women, were all there. The king and Madame de Maintenon sat in stiff dignity in the foreground. The appliances were worthy of the magnificent Court. In Oriental attires of silk, sweeping to their feet, set off with pearl and gold, the loveliest girls of France declaimed and sang the sonorous verse. It is really one of the most innocent and charming pictures that has come down to us of this age, when so much was hollow, pompous, and cruel.

Hamlet says to Polonius, "My lord, you played once in the university, you say." To which Polonius replies, "That I did, my lord, and was accounted a good actor. I did enact Julius Cæsar. I was killed in the Capitol." Do not suppose, Fastidiosus, that the playing of Polonius was any such light affair as you and I used to be concerned in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

up in the fourth story of "Stoughton," when we were members of the Hasty Pudding. In the Middle Ages, in convents and churches, flourished the mysteries; but, says Warton, in the "History of English Poetry," as learning increased, the practice of acting plays went over to the schools and universities. Before the sixteenth century we may find traces of dramatic vitality among the great English seminaries; but if the supposition of Huber, in his account of English universities, is correct, the real founder of the college drama in England was a character no less dignified than its founder in Germany. Erasmus, as he sits enthroned in a scholar's chair in the market-place at Rotterdam, the buildings about leaning on their insecure foundations out of the perpendicular, and the market-women, with their apple-bloom complexions, crowding around him, shows a somewhat withered face and figure, less genial than the handsome Heidelberg professor as he stands at Worms. But it was Erasmus, probably, who, among many other things he did while in England, lent an important impulse to the acting of plays by students. He, no doubt, was no further interested than to have masterpieces of Greek and Latin drama represented, that the students might have exercise in those languages; but before the reign of Henry VIII. was finished, the practice was becoming pursued for other ends, and growing in importance. "Gammer Gurton's Needle," long supposed to be the first English comedy, was first acted by students at Cambridge. That our more rollicking boys had their counterparts then, we may know from its rousing drinking-song, which the fellows rang out at the opening of the second act, way back there in 1551. The chorus is not yet forgotten: —

"Backe and side go bare, go bare,
Booth foot and hand go colde;
But, belly, God send thee good ale inoughe,
Whether it be new or olde!"

For the most part, probably, the performances were of a more dignified character than this. Among the statutes of Trinity College, Cambridge, 1546, there is one entitled "de præfectu ludorum qui imperator dicitur," under whose direction and authority Latin comedies are to be exhibited in the hall at Christmas. This "imperator" must be a master of arts, and the society was to be governed by a set of laws framed in Latin verse. The authority of this potentate lasted from Christmas to Candlemas, during which time six spectacles were to be represented. Dr. John Dee, a prodigy of that century, who might have been illustrious like Bacon almost, but who wasted his later years in astrological dreams, in his younger life, while Greek lecturer at Cambridge, superintended in the refectory of the college the representation of the Εἰρήνη of Aristophanes, with no mean stage adjuncts, if we may trust his own account. He speaks particularly of the performance of a "Scarabeus, his flying up to Jupiter's palace with a man and his basket of victuals on his back; whereat was great wondering and many vain reports spread abroad of the means how that was effected." The great Roger Ascham, too, has left an indirect testimony to the splendor with which the Cambridge performances at this time were attended. In a journey on the Continent, wishing to express in the highest terms his sense of the beauty of Antwerp, he can say nothing stronger than that it as far surpasses other cities as the refectory of St. John's College at Cambridge, when adorned for the Christmas plays, surpasses its ordinary appearance. On these occasions, the most dignified personages of the University were invited, and at length, as was the German fashion, the representation of plays was adopted as part of the entertainment of visitors. In 1564, Queen Elizabeth visited Cambridge, and the picture transmitted to us of the festivities is full of brilliant lights. With the rest, five doctors of the University selected from all the colleges the youths of best appearance and address, who acted before the queen a series of plays of varied character, sometimes

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

grave, sometimes gay, in part of classic, in part of contemporary authorship. The theatre for the time was no other place than the beautiful King's College chapel, across the entire width of which the stage was built. For light, the yeomen of the royal guard, their fine figures in brillant uniform, stood in line from end to end of the chapel, each holding a torch. It was a superb scene, no doubt; the torches throwing their wavering glare against the tracery and the low, pointed arch of window and portal, so beautiful in this chapel, in the ruins of Kenilworth, or wherever it appears; the great space filled with the splendor that Roger Ascham thought so wonderful; and, among the glitter, the troop of handsome youths doing their best to please the sovereign. Froude gives a story from De Silva, the Spanish ambassador, which reflects so well the character of the time, and shows up boyish human nature with such amusing faithfulness, that I cannot omit it. When all was over, the students would not let well enough alone, but begged the tired queen to see one more play of their own devising, which they felt sure would give her special pleasure. The queen, however, departed, going ten miles on her journey to the seat of one of her nobility. The persistent boys followed her, and she granted them permission to perform before her in the evening. What should the unconscionable dogs do but drag in the bitter trouble of the time, and heedlessly trample on the queen's prejudices. The actors entered dressed like the bishops of Queen Mary, who were then in prison. Bonner carried a lamb, at which he rolled his eyes and gnashed his teeth. A dog brought up the rear, carrying the Host in his mouth. What further was to follow no one can say. The queen, who was never more than half a Protestant, and clung to the mass all the more devoutly because she was obliged to resign so much, filled the air with her indignation. She swore good round oaths, we may be sure, and left the room in a rage. The lights were put out, and the students made off in the dark as they could.

The history of the drama at Oxford has episodes of equal interest. The visitor who goes through the lovely Christ Church meadows to the Isis to see the boats, returning, will be sure to visit the refectory of Christ Church. The room is very fine in its proportions and decoration, and hung with the portraits of the multitude of brilliant men who in their young days were Christ Church men. During all the centuries that the rich dark stain has been gathering upon the carved oak in the ceiling and wainscot, it has been the scene of banquets and pageants without number, at which the most illustrious characters of English history have figured. I doubt, however, if any of its associations are finer than those connected with the student plays that have been performed here. Passing over occasions of this kind of less interest of which I find mention, in 1566 Elizabeth visited Oxford, to do honor to whom in this great hall of Christ Church plays were given. Oxford was determined not to be outdone by what had happened at Cambridge two years before. From the accounts, the delight of the hearty queen must have been intense; and as she was never afraid to testify most frankly her genuine feelings, we may be sure the Oxford authorities and their pupils must have presented their entertainments with extraordinary pomp. The plays, as at Cambridge, were of various character, but the one that gave especial pleasure was an English piece having the same subject as the "Knighte's Tale" of Chaucer, and called "Palamon and Arcite." It would be pleasant to know that the poet followed as far as possible the words of Chaucer. There is a fine incident narrated connected with the performance. In the scene of the chase, when

> "Theseus, with alle joye and blys,
> With his Ypolita, the faire queene,
> And Emelye, clothed al in greene,
> On hontyng be they riden ryally."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a "cry of hounds" was counterfeited under the windows in the quadrangle. The students present thought it was a real chase, and were seized with a sudden transport to join the hunters. At this, the delighted queen, sitting in stiff ruff and farthingale among her maids of honor, burst out above all the tumult with, "O, excellent! These boys, in very truth, are ready to leap out of the windows to follow the hounds!" When the play was over, the queen called up the poet, who was present, and the actors, and loaded them with thanks and compliments.

When, forty years after, in 1605, the dull James came to Oxford, the poor boys had a harder time. A thing very noteworthy happened when the king entered the city in his progress from Woodstock. If Warton's notion is correct, scarcely the iron cross in the pavement that marks the spot where the bishops were burned, or the solemn chamber in which they were tried, yea, scarcely Guy Fawkes's lantern, which they show you at the Bodleian, or the Brazen Nose itself, are memorials as interesting as the archway leading into the quadrangle of St. John's College, under whose carving, quaint and graceful, one now gets the lovely glimpse into the green and bloom of the gardens at the back. At this gate, three youths dressed like witches met the king, declaring they were the same that once met Macbeth and Banquo, prophesying a kingdom to one and to the other a generation of monarchs, that they now appeared to show the confirmation of the prediction. Warton's conjecture is that Shakespeare heard of this, or perhaps was himself in the crowd that watched the boys as they came whirling out in their weird dance, and that then and there was cónceived what was to become the mightiest birth of the human brain, — Macbeth.

King James, however, received it all coldly. The University, kindled by the traditions of Elizabeth's visit, did its best. Leland gives a glimpse of the stage arrangements in Christ Church Hall. Towards the end "was a scene like a wall, painted and adorned by stately pillars, which pillars would turn about, by reason whereof, with the help of other painted cloths, their stage did vary three times." But the king liked the scholastic hair-splitting with which he was elsewhere entertained better than the plays. In Christ Church Hall he yawned and even went to sleep, saying it was all mere childish amusement. In fact, the poor boys had to put up with even a worse rebuff; the king spoke many words of dislike, and when, in one of the plays, a pastoral, certain characters came in somewhat scantily attired, the queen and maids of honor took great offence, in which the king, who was not ordinarily overdelicate, concurred.

The practice of acting plays prevailed in the schools as well. The visitor to Windsor will remember in what peace, as seen from the great tower, beyond the smooth, dark Thames, the buildings of Eton lie among the trees. Crossing into the old town and entering the school precincts, where the stone stairways are worn by so many generations of young feet, and where on the play-ground the old elms shadow turf where so many soldiers and statesmen have been trained to struggle in larger fields, there is nothing after all finer than the great hall. In every age since the wars of the Roses, it has buzzed with the boisterous life of the privileged boys of England, who have come up afterward by the hundred to be historic men. There are still the fireplaces with the monogram of Henry VI., the old stained glass, the superb wood carving, the dais at the end. If there were no other memory connected with the magnificent hall, it would be enough that here, about 1550, was performed by the Eton boys, "Ralph Roister Doister," the first proper English comedy, written by Nicholas Udal, then head-master, for the Christmas holidays. He had the name of being a stern master, because old Tusser has left it on record that Udal whipped him,—

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

" for fault but small,
or none at all."

But the student of our old literature, reading the jolly play, will feel that, though he could handle the birch upon occasion, there was in him a fine genial vein. This was the first English comedy. The first English tragedy, too, " Gorboduc," was acted first by students, — this time students of law of the Inner Temple, — and the place of performance was close at hand to what one still goes to see in the black centre of the heart of London, those blossoming gardens of the Temple, verdant to-day as when the red-cross knights walked in them, or the fateful red and white roses were plucked there, or the voices of the young declaimers were heard from them, rolling out the turgid lines of Sackville's piece, the somewhat unpromising day-spring which a glorious sun-burst was to succeed. From Lincoln's Inn, in 1613, when the Princess Elizabeth married the elector-palatine and went off to Heidelberg Castle, the students came to the palace with a piece written by Chapman, and the performance cost a thousand pounds.

A famed contemporary of Udal was Richard Mulcaster, head-master of St. Paul's school, and afterward of Merchant Taylors', concerning whom we have, from delightful old Fuller, this quaint and naïve description: " In a morning he would exactly and plainly construe and parse the lesson to his scholars, which done, he slept his hour (custom made him critical to proportion it) in his desk in the school; but woe be to the scholar that slept the while. Awaking, he heard them accurately; and Atropos might be persuaded to pity as soon as he to pardon where he found just fault. The prayers of cockering mothers prevailed with him just as much as the requests of indulgent fathers, rather increasing than mitigating his severity on their offending children." The name of this Rhadamanthus of the birch occurs twice in entries of Elizabeth's paymaster, as receiving money for plays acted before her; and a certain proficiency as actors possessed by students of St. John's College at Oxford is ascribed to training given by old Mulcaster at the Merchant Taylors' school.

But no one of the great English public schools has enjoyed so long a fame in this regard as Westminster. According to Staunton, in his " Great Schools of England," Elizabeth desired to have plays acted by the boys, " Quo juventus tum actioni tum pronunciationi decenti melius se assuescat," that the youth might be better trained in proper bearing and pronunciation. The noted Bishop Atterbury wrote to a friend, Trelawney, Bishop of Winchester, concerning a performance here of Trelawney's son: " I had written to your lordship again on Saturday, but that I spent the evening in seeing " Phormio " acted in the college chamber, where, in good truth, my lord, Mr. Trelawney played Antipho extremely well, and some parts he performed admirably." In 1695, Dryden's play of " Cleomenes " was acted. Archbishop Markham, head-master one hundred years ago, gave a set of scenes designed by Garrick. In our own day, Dr. Williamson, head-master in 1828, drew attention in a pamphlet to the proper costuming of the performers; and when, in 1847, there was a talk of abolishing the plays, a memorial signed by six hundred old " Westminsters " was sent in, stating it as their " firm and deliberate belief, founded on experience and reflection, that the abolition of the Westminster play cannot fail to prove prejudicial to the interests and prosperity of the school." At the present time the best plays of Plautus and Terence are performed at Christmas in the school dormitory.

It all became excessive, and in Cromwell's time, with the accession of the Puritans to power, like a hundred other brilliant traits of the old English life from whose abuse had grown riot, it was purged away. Ben Jonson, in " The Staple of Newes," puts into the mouth of a sour character a complaint which no doubt was becoming com-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mon in that day, and was probably well enough justified. "They make all their schollers play-boyes! Is 't not a fine sight to see all our children made enterluders? Doe we pay our money for this? Wee send them to learne their grammar and their Terence and they learne their play-bookes. Well they talk we shall have no more parliaments, God blesse us! But an we have, I hope Zeale-of-the-land Buzzy, and my gossip Rabby Trouble-Truth, will start up and see we have painfull good ministers to keepe schoole, and catechise our youth; and not teach 'em to speake playes and act fables of false newes." Studying this rather unexplored subject, one gets many a glimpse of famous characters in interesting relations. Erasmus says that Sir Thomas More, "adolescens, comoediolas et scripsit et egit," and while a page with Archbishop Moreton, as plays were going on in the palace during the Christmas holidays, he would often, showing his school-boy accomplishment, step on the stage without previous notice, and exhibit a part of his own which gave more satisfaction than the whole performance besides.

In Leland's report of the theatricals where King James behaved so ungraciously, "the machinery of the plays," he says, "was chiefly conducted by Mr. Jones, who undertook to furnish them with rare devices, but performed very little to what was expected." This is believed to have been Inigo Jones, who soon was to gain great fame as manager of the Court masques. The entertainment was probably ingenious and splendid enough, but every one took his cue from the king's pettishness, and poor "Mr. Jones" had to bear his share of the ill-humor.

In 1629 a Latin play was performed at Cambridge before the French ambassador. Among the student spectators sat a youth of twenty, with long locks parted in the middle and falling upon his doublet, and the brow and eyes of the god Apollo, who curled his lip in scorn, and signalized himself by his stormy discontent. Here is his own description of his conduct: "I was a spectator; they thought themselves gallant men, and I thought them fools; they made sport, and I laughed; they mispronounced, and I misliked; and to make up the Atticism, they were out and I hissed." It was the young Milton, in the year in which he wrote the "Hymn on the Nativity."

Do I need to cite other precedents for the procedure at the Sweetbrier? I grant you it cannot be done from the practice of American colleges. The strictest form of Puritanism stamped itself too powerfully upon our New England institutions at their foundation, and has affected too deeply the newer seminaries elsewhere in the country, to make it possible that the drama should be anything but an outlaw here. Nevertheless, at Harvard, Yale, and probably every considerable college of the country, the drama has for a long time led a clandestine life in secret student societies, persecuted or at best ignored by the college government,—an unwholesome weed that deserved no tending, if it was not to be at once uprooted.

I do not advocate, Fastidiosus, a return to the ancient state of things, which I doubt not was connected with many evils; but is there not reason to think a partial revival of the old customs would be worth while? It was not for mirth merely that the old professors and teachers countenanced the drama. To the editors of "David's Harp" I have sent this passage from Milton, noblest among the Puritans, and have besought them to lay it before their consistory: "Whether eloquent and graceful incitements, instructing and bettering the nation at all opportunities, not only in pulpits, but after another persuasive method, in theatres, porches, or whatever place or way, may not win upon the people to receive both recreation and instruction, let them in authority consult." The German schoolmasters and professors superintended their boys in the representation of religious plays to instruct them in the theology which they

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thought all important; in the performance of Aristophanes and Lucian, Plautus and Terence, mainly in the hope of improving them in Greek and Latin: and when the plays were in the vernacular, it was often to train their taste, manners, and elocution. Erasmus and the Oxford and Cambridge authorities certainly had the same ideas as the Continental scholars. So the English schoolmasters in general, who also managed in the plays to give useful hints in all ways. For instance, Nicholas Udal, in the ingenious letter in "Ralph Roister Doister," which is either loving or insulting according to the position of a few commas or periods, must have meant to enforce the doctrine of Chaucer's couplet: —

"He that pointeth ill,
A good sentence may oft spill."

Madame de Maintenon was persuaded that amusements of this sort have a value, "imparting grace, teaching a polite pronunciation, and cultivating the memory"; and Racine commends the management of St. Cyr, where "the hours of recreation, so to speak, are put to profit by making the pupils recite the finest passages of the best poets." Here is the dramatic instinct, almost universal among young people, and which has almost no chance to exercise itself, except in the performance of the farces to which we are treated in "private theatricals." Can it not be put to a better use? It would be a cumbrous matter to represent or listen to the "Aulularia," or the "Miles Gloriosus," or the Εἰρήνη, in which Dr. Dee and his Scarabeus figured so successfully. The world is turned away from that; but here is the magnificent wealth of our own old dramatic literature, in which is contained the richest poetry of our language. It was never intended to be read, but to be heard in living presentment. For the most part it lies almost unknown, except in the case of Shakespeare, and him the world knows far too little. Who does not feel what a treasure in the memory are passages of fine poetry committed early in life? Who can doubt the value to the bearing, the fine address, the literary culture of a youth of either sex that might come from the careful study and the attempt to render adequately a fine conception of some golden writer of our golden age, earnestly made, if only partially successful?

I say only partially successful, but can you doubt the capacity of our young people to render in a creditable way the conceptions of a great poet? Let us look at the precedents again. When Mademoiselle de Caylus, in her account of St. Cyr, speaks of the representation of "Andromaque," she writes, "It was only too well done." And prim Madame de Maintenon wrote to Racine: "Our young girls have played it so well they shall play it no more"; begging him to write some moral or historic poem. Hence came the beautiful masterpiece "Esther," to which the young ladies seem to have done the fullest justice, for listen to the testimony. The brilliant Madame de Lafayette wrote: "There was no one, great or small, that did not want to go, and this mere drama of a convent became the most serious affair of the Court." That the admiration was not merely feigned because it was the fashion, here is the testimony of a woman of the finest taste, Madame de Sévigné, given in her intimate letters to her daughter, who, in these confidences, spared no one who deserved criticism: "The king and all the Court are charmed with 'Esther.' The prince has wept over it. I cannot tell you how delightful the piece is. There is so perfect a relation between the music, the verses, the songs, and the personages, that one seeks nothing more. The airs set to the words have a beauty which cannot be borne without tears, and according to one's taste is the measure of approbation given to the piece. The king addressed me and said, 'Madame, I am sure you have been pleased.' I, without being astonished, answered, 'Sire, I am charmed. What I feel is beyond words.' The king said to me, 'Racine has much

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

genius.' I said to him, 'Sire, he has much, but in truth these young girls have much too; they enter into the subject as if they had done nothing else.' 'Ah! as to that,' said he, 'it is true.' And then his Majesty went away and left me the object of envy." Racine himself says in the Preface to "Esther": "The young ladies have declaimed and sung this work with so much modesty and piety, it has not been possible to keep it shut up in the secrecy of the institution; so that a diversion of young people has become a subject of interest for all the Court"; and what is still more speaking, he wrote at once the "Athalie," "la chef-d'œuvre de la poésie française," in the judgment of the French critics, to be rendered by the same young tyros. When, in 1566, in Christ Church Hall, "Palamon and Arcite" was finished, outspoken Queen Bess, with her frank eyes full of pleasure, declared "that Palamon must have been in love indeed. Arcite was a right martial knight, having a swart and manly countenance, yet like a Venus clad in armor." To the son of the dean of Christ Church, the boy of fourteen, who played Emilie in the dress of a princess, her compliment was still higher. It was a present of eight guineas, — for the penurious sovereign, perhaps, the most emphatic expression of approval possible.

Shall I admit for a moment that our American young folks have less grace and sensibility than the French girls, and the Oxford youths who pleased Elizabeth? Your face now, Fastidiosus, wears a frown like that of Rhadamanthus; but I remember our Hasty-Pudding days, when you played the part of a queen, and behaved in your disguise like Thor, in the old saga, when he went to Riesenheim in the garb of Freya, and honest giants, like Thrym, were frightened back the whole width of the hall. Well, I do not censure it, and I do not believe you recall it with a sigh; and the reminiscence emboldens me to ask you whether it would not be still better if our dear Harvard, say (the steam of the pudding infects me through twenty years), among the many new wrinkles she in her old age so appropriately contracts, should devote an evening of Commencement-time to a performance, by the students, under the sanction and direction of professors, of some fine old masterpiece?

At our little Sweetbrier we have young men and young women together, as at Oberlin, Antioch, and Massachusetts normal schools. I have no doubt our Hermione, when we gave the "Winter's Tale," had all the charm of Mademoiselle de Veillanne, who played Esther at St. Cyr. I have no doubt our Portia, in the "Merchant of Venice," in the trial scene, her fine stature and figure robed in the doctor's long silk gown, which fell to her feet, and her abundant hair gathered out of sight into an ample velvet cap, so that she looked like a most wise and fair young judge, recited

"The quality of mercy is not strained,"

in a voice as thrilling as that in which Mademoiselle de Glapion gave the part of Mordecai. I am sure Queen Elizabeth would think our young cavaliers, well knit and brown from the base-ball field, "right martial knights, having swart and manly countenances." If she could have seen our Antoninus, when we gave the act from Massinger's most sweet and tender tragedy of the "Virgin Martyr," or the noble Cæsar, in our selections from Beaumont and Fletcher's "False One," she would have been as ready with the guineas as she was in the case of the son of the dean of Christ Church.

Our play at the last Commencement was "Much Ado about Nothing." It was selected six months before, and studied with the material in mind, the students in the literature class, available for the different parts. What is there, thought I, in Beatrice — sprightliness covering intense womanly feeling — that our vivacious, healthful Ruth Brown cannot master; and what in Benedick, her masculine counterpart, beyond the power of Moore to conceive and render? It is chiefly

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

girlish beauty and simple sweetness that Hero requires, so she shall be Edith Grey. Claudio, Leonato, Don John, Pedro, — we have clean-limbed, presentable fellows that will look and speak them all well; and as for lumbering Dogberry, Abbot, with his fine sense of the ludicrous, will carry it out in the best manner. A dash of the pencil here and there through the lines where Shakespeare was suiting his own time, and not the world as it was to be after three hundred refining years, and the marking out of a few scenes that could be spared from the action, and the play was ready; trimmed a little, but with not a whit taken from its sparkle or pathos, and all its lovelier poetry untouched.

Then came long weeks of drill. In the passage,

> " O my lord,
> When you went onward to this ended action,
> I looked upon her with a soldier's eye," etc.,

Claudio caught the fervor and softness at last, and seemed (it would have pleased Queen Bess better than Madame de Maintenon) like Palamon, in love indeed. Ursula and Hero rose easily to the delicate poetry of the passages that begin,

> " The pleasantest angling is to see the fish
> Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,"

and

> " Look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs."

Pedro got to perfection his turn and gesture in

> " The wolves have preyed; and look, the gentle day,
> Before the wheels of Phœbus, round about
> Dapples the drowsy east with spots of gray."

With the rough comedy of Dogberry and the watchmen, that foils so well the sad tragedy of poor Hero's heart-breaking, and contrasts in its blunders with the diamond-cut-diamond dialogue of Benedick and Beatrice, there was less difficulty. From first to last, it was engrossing labor, as hard for the trainer as the trained, yet still delightful work; for what is a conscientious manager, but an artist striving to perfect a beautiful dramatic picture? The different personages are the pieces for his mosaic, who, in emphasis, tone, gesture, by-play, must be carved and filed until there are no flaws in the joining, and the shading is perfect. But all was ready at last, from the roar of Dogberry at the speech of Conrade,

> " Away! you 're an ass! you 're an ass!"

to the scarcely articulate agony of Hero when she sinks to the earth at her lover's sudden accusation,

> " O Heavens! how am I beset!
> What kind of catechising call you this?"

I fancy you ask, rather sneeringly, as to our scenery and stage adjuncts. Once, in the great court theatre at Munich, I saw Wagner's " Rhein-Gold." The king was present, and all was done for splendor that could be done in that centre of art. When the curtain rose, the whole great river Rhine seemed to be flowing before you across the stage, into the side of whose flood you looked as one looks through the glass side of an aquarium. At the bottom were rocks in picturesque piles; and, looking up through the tide to the top, as a diver might, the spectator saw the surface of the river, with the current rippling forward upon it, and the sunlight just touching the waves. Through the flood swam the daughters of the Rhine, sweeping fair arms backward as they floated, their drapery trailing heavy behind them, darting straight as arrows, or winding sinuously, from bottom to top, from side to side, singing wildly as the Lorelei. The scene changed, and it was the depths of the earth, red-glowing and full of gnomes. And a third time, after a change, you saw from mountain-tops the city which the giants had built in the heavens for the gods, — a glittering dome or pinnacle now and then breaking the line of white palaces, now and then a superb cloud floating before it, until, at last, a mist seemed to rise from valleys below, wrapping it little by little, till all became invisible in soft gradations of vapory gloom. I shall never again see anything like that, where an art-loving court subsidizes heavily scene-painter and machinist; but for all that, is it wise to have only sneers for what can be brought to pass with more modest

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

means? Our hall at Sweetbrier is as large as the Christ Church refectory, and handsomely proportioned and decorated. A wide stage runs across the end. We found some ample curtains of crimson, set off with a heavy yellow silken border of quite rich material, which had been used to drape a window that had disappeared in the course of repairs. This, stretched from side to side, made a wall of brilliant color against the gray tint of the room; and possibly Roger Ascham, seeing our audience-room before and after the hanging of it, might have had a thought of Antwerp. The stage is the one thing in the world privileged to deceive. The most devoted reader of Ruskin can tolerate shams here. The costumes were devised with constant reference to Charles Knight, and, to the eye, were of the gayest silk, satin, and velvet. There was, moreover, a profusion of jewels, which, for all one could see, sparkled with all the lustre of the great Florentine diamond, as you see it suspended above the imperial crowns in the Austrian Schatz-Kammer at Vienna. The contrasts of tint were well attended to. Pedro was in white and gold, Claudio in blue and silver, Leonato in red; while our handsome Benedick, a youth of dark Italian favor, in doublet of orange, a broad black velvet sash, and scarlet cloak, shone like a bird of paradise.

There was a garden-scene, in the foreground of which, where the eyes of the spectators were near enough to discriminate, were rustic baskets with geraniums, fuchsias, and cactuses, to give a southern air. In the middle distance, armfuls of honeysuckle in full bloom were brought in and twined about white pilasters. There was an arbor overhung with heavy masses of the trumpet-creeper. A tall column or two surmounted with graceful garden-vases were covered about with raspberry-vines, the stems of brilliant scarlet showing among the green. A thick clump of dogwood, whose large white blossoms could easily pass for magnolias, gave background. The green was lit with showy color of every sort, — handfuls of nasturtiums, now and than a peony, larkspurs for blue, patches of poppies, and in the garden-vases high on the pillars (the imposition!) clusters of pink hollyhocks which were meant to pass for oleander-blossoms, and did. It was brought in at sundown, still wet with the drops of the afternoon shower, which had not dried away when all was in place. First, it was given under gas; then, the hall being darkened, a magnesium-light gave a moon-like radiance, in which the dew on the buds glistened, and the mignonette seemed to exhale a double perfume, and a dreamy melody of Mendelssohn sung by two sweet girl-voices floated out about the "pleached bower," like a song of nightingales. Then toward the end came the scene of the chapel and Hero's tomb. No lovelier form was ever sculptured than that of the beautiful Queen Louisa of Prussia, as she lies in the mausoleum at Charlottenburg, carved by Rauch, asleep on the tomb in white purity. To the eye, our Hero's tomb was just such a block of spotless marble seen against a background of black, with just such a fair figure recumbent upon it, whose palms and lids and draping the chisel of an artist seemed to have folded and closed and hung, — all idealized again by the magic of the magnesium-light. As the crimson curtain was drawn apart, an organ sounded, and a far-away choir sent into the hush the "Ave Verum" of Mozart, low-breathed and solemn.

It was not Munich, Fastidiosus. They were American young men and young women, with no resources but those of a fresh-water college, and such as their own taste and the woods and gardens could furnish; but the young men were shapely and intelligent, and the young women had grace and brightness; their hearts were in it, and in the result surely there was a measure of "sweetness and light," for them and those who beheld.

You fear it may beget in young minds a taste for the theatre, now

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hopelessly given over in great part to abominations. Why not a taste that will lift them above the abominations? Old Joachim Greff, schoolmaster at Dessau in 1545, who has a place in the history of German poetry, has left it on record that he trained his scholars to render noble dramas in the conscientious hope "that a little spark of art might be kept alive in the schools under the ashes of barbarism." "And this little spark," says Gervinus, "did these bold men, indeed, through two hundred years, keep honestly until it could again break out into flame." Instead of fearing the evil result, rather would I welcome a revival of what Warton calls "this very liberal exercise." Were Joachim Greffs masters in our high schools and in the English chairs in our colleges, we might now and then catch a glimpse of precious things at present hidden away in never-opened storehouses, and see something done toward the development of a taste that should drive out the *opera-bouffe*.

Here, at the end, Fastidiosus, is what I now shape in mind. Henri Taine, in one of his rich descriptions, thus pictures the performance of a masque: "The *élite* of the kingdom is there upon the stage, the ladies of the court, the great lords, the queen, in all the splendor of their rank and their pride, in diamonds, earnest to display their luxury so that all the brilliant features of the nation's life are concentrated in the price they give, like gems in a casket. What adornment! What profusion of magnificence! What variety! What metamorphoses! Gold sparkles, jewels emit light, the purple draping imprisons within its rich folds the radiance of the lustres. The light is reflected from shining silk. Threads of pearl are spread in rows upon brocades sewed with thread of silver. Golden embroideries intertwine in capricious arabesques, costumes, jewels, appointments so extraordinarily rich that the stage seems a mine of glory." The fashionable world of our time has little taste for such pleasures. This old splendor we cannot produce; but the words which the magnificent lords and ladies spoke to one another as they blazed, were those that make up the poetry of Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess," Ben Jonson's "Sad Shepherd," and, finest of all, the "Comus" of Milton. They are the most matchless frames of language in which sweet thoughts and fancies were ever set. After all, before this higher beauty, royal pomp even seems only a coarse excrescence, and all would be better if the accessories of the rendering were very simple. Already in my mind is the grove for "Comus" designed; the mass of green which shall stand in the centre, the blasted trunk that shall rise for contrast to one side, and the vine that shall half conceal the splintered summit, the banks of wild-flowers that shall be transferred, the light the laboratory shall yield us to make all seem as if seen through enchanter's incense. I have in mind the sweet-voiced girl who shall be the lost lady and sing the invocation to Sabrina; the swart youth who shall be the magician, and say the lines,

> "At every fall, smoothing the raven down
> Of darkness till it smiled";

and the golden-haired maid who shall glide in and out in silvery attire, as the attendant spirit. Come, Fastidiosus, — I shall invite too the editors of "David's Harp," — and you shall all own the truth of Milton's own words, "that sanctity and virtue and truth herself may in this wise be elegantly dressed," when the attendant spirit recites: —

> "Now my task is smoothly done,
> I can fly or I can run
> Quickly to the green earth's end,
> Where the bowed welkin low doth bend;
> And from thence can soar as soon
> To the corners of the moon.
> Mortals that would follow me,
> Love virtue; she alone is free,
> She can teach ye how to climb
> Higher than the sphery chime;
> Or if virtue feeble were,
> Heaven itself would stoop to her."

J. K. Hosmer.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JEFFERSON A REFORMER OF OLD VIRGINIA.

A TEMPTATION crossed Jefferson's path while the Declaration of Independence was still a fresh topic in Christendom. It was a temptation which was, and is, of all others the most alluring to an American who is young, educated, and fond of art; and it came to him in such a guise of public duty, that, if he had yielded to it, only one person in the world would have blamed him. But the censure of that one would have properly outweighed a world's applause: for it was himself.

This temptation presented itself on the 8th of October, 1776. He had resigned his seat in Congress, and, after spending a few days at home, had proceeded to Williamsburg, where he had taken his seat in the Legislature, and was about to engage in the hard and long task of bringing up old Virginia to the level of the age. His heart was set on this work. He wanted to help deliver her from the bondage of outgrown laws, and introduce some of the institutions and usages which had given to New England so conspicuous a superiority over the Southern Colonies. A Virginian, dining one day with John Adams, lamented the inferiority of his State to New England. "I can give you," said Mr. Adams, "a receipt for making a New England in Virginia: *Town meetings, training-days, town schools, and ministers;* the meeting-house, school-house, and training-field are the scenes where New England men were formed." Probably Mr. Jefferson had heard his friend Adams say something of the kind. He was now intent upon purging the Virginia statute-books of unsuitable laws, and founding institutions in accord with the new order of things.

Young as he was, he had had some training now in practical statesmanship. That sharp experience in Congress, while his draft of the Declaration of Independence was *edited* of its crudities, redundancies, and imprudences, was salutary to him. It completed the preliminary part of his education as a public man, — a public man being one who has to do, not with what is ideally best, but with the best attainable; not to give eloquent expression to his own ideas, but effective expression to the will of his constituents. He wrote little that needed severe pruning after July 4, 1776, though he was still to propose many things that were unattainable. A truly wise, bold, safe, competent public man is one of the slowest formations in nature; but when formed, there is only one man more precious, — the philosopher who is the common teacher of legislators and constituents. If there had been such a philosopher in Virginia just then, he would have smiled, perhaps, at the noble enthusiasm of these young Virginians, who were about to try to make a New England out of a State in which the laboring majority were only too likely to remain slaves.

But it belongs to the generous audacity of youth to attempt the impossible. Here, at Williamsburg, in this October, 1776, were gathered once more the circle of Virginia liberals who had been working together against the exactions of the king. Patrick Henry was governor now, living in "the palace," and enjoying the old viceregal salary of a thousand pounds a year. George Wythe, from service in Congress, had acquired experience and distinction. It was he who began the constitution-making in which Virginia had been engaged during much of this year. In January, while spending an evening with Mr. John Adams at Philadelphia, and hearing him discourse, in his robust and ancient-Briton manner, of the constitution proper for a free state, George Wythe asked him to put the substance of his ideas upon paper.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mr. Adams gave him, in consequence, his "Thoughts upon Government"; which were the best thoughts on that subject of Locke, Milton, Algernon Sidney, James Otis, and John Adams. How congenial to Mr. Adams such a piece of work! "The best lawgivers of antiquity," said he, "would rejoice to live at a period like this, when, for the first time in the history of the world, three millions of people were deliberately *choosing* their government and institutions." Patrick Henry was well pleased with the "Thoughts." "It shall be my incessant study," he wrote to Mr. Adams, "so to form our portrait of government that a kindred with New England may be discerned in it." So thought all the band of radically liberal men in Virginia, who were beginning to regard Thomas Jefferson as their chief.

And now, on the second day of the session, came a fair excuse for him to leave the "laboring oar," and throw the difficult task of re-creating Virginia upon his colleagues. A messenger from the Honorable Congress reached Williamsburg, October 8th, bearing a despatch for Mr. Jefferson, informing him that he had been elected joint commissioner with Dr. Franklin and Silas Deane to represent the United States at Paris. The temptation was all but irresistible. He relished extremely the delicious society of Dr. Franklin, and was getting into the Franklinian way of dealing with cantankerous man. Paris, too, to which good Americans were already looking as the abode of the blest, where Jefferson could see, at last, after living in the world thirty-three years, harmoniously proportioned edifices, and listen to music such as the Williamsburg "Apollo" had only heard in dreams. The public duty, also, was supposed to be of the first importance. Perhaps it was; but, also, perhaps it was not. Considering the whole case, the young giant might have done better if he had, from the first, made up his mind to fight unassisted. It was a costly business, that French alliance; the heaviest item being the habit of leaning upon France, and looking for help, at every pinch, to the *French* treasury. But this could not have been foreseen in 1776; and happy, indeed, would it have been for Franklin, for the country, for the future, if he could have been seconded by a person so formed to co-operate with him as Jefferson. Franklin would have got Canada at the peace of 1782, if he had had a Jefferson to help, instead of a Jay and an Adams to hinder.

Torn with contending desires, Jefferson kept the messenger waiting day after day; so hard was it to say No to Congress, and to give up an appointment promising so much honor and delight. But his duty was plain. There was a lady upon Monticello who had a claim upon his services with which no other claim could compete. To leave her in the condition in which she was, had been infidelity; and to take her with him might have been fatal to her. Virginia had many sons, but Mrs. Jefferson had but one husband. So, on the 11th of October, the messenger mounted and rode away, bearing the proper answer to the President of Congress: —

"It would argue great insensibility in me, could I receive with indifference so confidential an appointment from your body. My thanks are a poor return for the partiality they have been pleased to entertain for me. No cares for my own person, nor yet for my private affairs, would have induced one moment's hesitation to accept the charge. But circumstances very peculiar in the situation of my family, such as neither permit me to leave nor to carry it, compel me to ask leave to decline a service so honorable, and, at the same time, so important to the American cause. The necessity under which I labor, and the conflict I have undergone for three days, during which I could not determine to dismiss your messenger, will, I hope, plead my pardon with Congress; and I am sure there are too many of that body to whom they may with better hopes confide this charge, to leave them under

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a moment's difficulty in making a new choice."

As soon as he had reached a decision on this important matter, his colleagues in the Assembly, who had been waiting for it, placed him on a great number of committees; and he began forthwith, on the very day of the messenger's departure, to introduce the measures of reform which he had meditated. Mr. Adams might well regard Virginia as a reformer's paradise; for, owing to the colonial necessity of submitting every desired change to the king, which involved time, trouble, expense, and probable rejection, the Province was far behind even Great Britain in that adaptation of laws and institutions to altered times, which ought to be always in progress in every community. There was such an accumulation, in Virginia, of the outgrown and the unsuitable, that Jefferson and his friends hoped to accomplish in a few months an amount of radical change that would have been a fair allowance for a century and a half.

The law-books were full of old absurdity and old cruelty.* Of the four hundred thousand people who were supposed to inhabit Virginia, one half were African slaves; and it was a fixed idea in the Jefferson circle, that whites and blacks could not live in equal freedom in the same community. Besides the intense prejudice entertained by the master race against the servile, and the hatred which had been gathering (as Jefferson thought) in the minds of the slaves from four generations of outrage, he believed that Nature herself had made it impossible for the two races to live happily together on equal terms. He evidently had a low opinion of the mental capacity of his colored brethren. The Indian, with no opportunities of mental culture beyond those of the negro, had acquired the art of oratory, could carve the bowl of his pipe into a head not devoid of truth and spirit, and draw upon a piece of bark a figure resembling an animal, a plant, a tract of country. But never had he observed in a negro, or a negro's work, one gleam of superior intelligence, aptitude, or taste. No negro standing behind his master's chair had caught from the conversation of educated persons an elevated mode of thinking. "Never," says Mr. Jefferson, "could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never saw even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture." In music they were more gifted, but no negro had yet imagined anything beyond "a small catch." Love, which inspires the melodious madness of poets, kindles only the senses of a black man, not his mind, and has never, in all the tide of time, wrung from him a word which other lovers love to repeat. Mere misery, to other races, has been inspiration. The blacks are wretched enough, but they have never uttered their woes in poetry.

For these and other reasons, Mr. Jefferson was disposed to regard the negro race as naturally inferior; though he expresses himself on the point with the hesitation natural to a scientific mind provided with a scant supply of facts. On the political question, he was clear: the two races could not live together in peace as equals. The attempt to do so, he thought, would "divide Virginians into parties, and produce convulsions which would probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race." Here was a problem for a knot of young legislators, without a precedent to guide them in all the known history of man!

The gross ignorance of the white inhabitants, except one small class, was another too obvious fact. They were almost as ignorant as Europeans, with

* Like this, for example: "Whereas, oftentimes many brabling women often slander and scandalize their neighbors for which their poore husbands are often brought into chargeable and vexatious suites, and caste in greate damages: Bee it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid, that in actions of slander, occasioned by the wife as aforesaid, after judgment passed for the damages, the woman shall be punished by ducking; and if the slander be soe enormous as to be adjudged at a greater damage than five hundred pounds of tobacco, then the woman to suffer a ducking for each five hundred pounds of tobacco adjudged against the husband, if he refuse to pay the tobacco."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fewer restraints than Europeans. Almost every glimpse we get of the poorer Virginians of that day is a revelation of rude and reckless ignorance. We have in the Memoirs of Elkanah Watson, who rode through Virginia in 1778, an election scene at Hanover Court-House, which must have been a startling contrast to the elections he had witnessed in his native Massachusetts, where an election was a solemnity opened with prayer. The "whole county," he records, was assembled. "The moment I alighted, a wretched, pug-nosed fellow assailed me to swap watches. I had hardly shaken him off when I was attacked by a wild Irishman, who insisted on my swapping horses with him, and in a twinkling ran up the pedigree of his horse to the grand dam. Treating his importunity with little respect, I became near being involved in a boxing-match, the Irishman swearing I did not 'trate him like a jintleman.' I had hardly escaped this dilemma when my attention was attracted by a fight between two very unwieldy fat men, foaming and puffing like two furies, until one succeeded in twisting a forefinger in a side-lock of the other's hair, and in the act of thrusting by this purchase his thumb into the latter's eye, he bawled out, *King's Cruse*, equivalent in technical language to Enough."

There was in Virginia an unusually large proportion of this savage ignorance, easily convertible into fanatical ignorance. The handling of tobacco, it appears, gave employment to a great number of rough fellows, — tobacco-rollers, among others, who drove a pin into each end of a hogshead of tobacco, and thus attaching to it a pair of shafts, harnessed a horse to it, and rolled it to the landing. Professor Tucker of Virginia speaks of this class as "hardy, reckless, proverbially rude, and often indulging in coarse humor at the expense of the traveller who chanced to be well dressed or riding in a carriage." But ignorance was almost universal in Virginia, as it must be in every community, unless there is a universal system of education. And this was another problem for the young gentlemen at Williamsburg who desired to Yankeefy Virginia. Mr. Jefferson, for one, felt the absolute necessity of the voting class being able to *vote*.

He saw, too, wherever he looked in Virginia, the evils arising from ill-distributed wealth. It is the nature of wealth to get into heaps; because it is the nature of the weak to squander their money, and of the strong to husband it; and this being its nature, laws need not aggravate the tendency. But in Virginia, as in all the old-fashioned countries, there was a whole system of laws and usages expressly designed to keep property from being distributed. Fathers could prevent a profligate son from sinking to his natural level in the community, by entailing upon him and upon the first-born of his male descendants, not his landed estates only, but the negroes who gave them value; and this entail could only be broken by a special act of the Legislature. The law of primogeniture prevented the natural division of estates among all the family of a deceased proprietor, excluding all the daughters, and all the sons but one. The consequence was, that the best portions of Virginia were held by a few families, who suffered the ills and inconveniences of aristocratic rank, without attaining that moral elevation which is possible to aristocrats who accept the public duties of their position. They monopolized the honors of the Colony; but, as a class, they appear to have been as destitute of public spirit as the grandees of Spain or Poland. There is only one test of a genuine superiority, and that test was as familiar to their ears as it was foreign to their hearts: "Let him that will be chief among you, be your servant," a perfect definition of a proper aristocracy. Jefferson, Henry, Madison, and their circle, who had been contending with the aristocracy of Virginia during the whole of their public life, had to consider a remedy for this evil also.

The Established Church, during the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ten years preceding the Revolution, had been pressing heavily upon the people of Virginia. Virginians used sometimes to ridicule New-Englanders whom they chanced to meet, for the persecution of the Quakers in Massachusetts, and the witchcraft delusion of Salem and Boston. It is the privilege of an American citizen to be profoundly ignorant of his country's history; and Virginians, availing themselves of this privilege, are not generally aware that at the time when Yankee magistrates were hanging witches and whipping Quakers, Virginia justices of the peace were putting Quakers in the pillory for keeping their hats on in church, and appointing juries of matrons to fumble over the bodies of old women for "witch-marks," which, of course, they found. John Burk, historian of Virginia, intimates that a woman was burned to death in Princess Anne County for witchcraft, and adds that, "in all probability, the case was not solitary." And as Massachusetts expelled Roger Williams and others for opinions' sake, so did Virginia, in the same generation, refuse a residence to some Puritan clergymen who went from Massachusetts to Virginia upon the urgent invitation of persons of their own faith. But there is this to be said in favor of the Yankees: They recovered from the mania of uniformity sooner than the Virginians. If, in 1650, they regarded the celebration of the mass as a capital offence, and would not permit the Church of England service to be performed, nor the rite of baptism to be administered by immersion, nor a company of men to pray with their hats on, yet, in 1750, all these things were permitted, except, perhaps, the celebration of the mass. But, in Virginia, the Established Church had become more intolerant, as the Colony increased in population. It seemed so hostile to liberty, that James Madison, after coming home from Princeton College in New Jersey, where he was educated, expressed the opinion that if the Church of England had been established and endowed in all the Colonies as it was in Virginia, the king would have had his way, and gradually reduced all America to subjection.

It was not merely that obsolete (though unrepealed) law still made Jefferson and several of his most virtuous friends liable to be burned to death for heresy; nor that a denial of the doctrine of the Trinity was legally punishable by three years' imprisonment; nor that Unitarians could be legally deprived of the custody of their own children, and those children assigned to drunken and dissolute Trinitarians; nor even that Baptists, Presbyterians, and Quakers had to pay for supporting a church they did not attend; — these were not the grievances which made Virginians restive under the establishment.

In 1774, when Madison was twenty-three, we find him writing to a Northern friend: "I want again to breathe your free air. . . . . That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some; and, to their eternal infamy, the clergy can furnish their quota of imps for such purposes. There are at this time, in the adjacent county, not less than five or six well-meaning men in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which, in the main, are very orthodox." These prisoners were Baptists, the most numerous and enterprising of the dissenting sects. The historian of the Virginia Baptists, Semple, throws light on Mr. Madison's brief, indignant record. The Baptist ministers, from 1768 to 1775, were frequently arrested, he tells us; and, as it was awkward to define their exact offence, they were usually arraigned as "disturbers of the peace." He gives a ludicrous account of the first arrest, which occurred in 1768, near the seat of the Madisons. Young Madison, then a lad of seventeen, may have witnessed the ridiculous scene. Three Baptist preachers were seized by the sheriff on the same Sunday morning, and brought to the yard of the parish church, where three magistrates, who were in waiting for them,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bound them in a thousand pounds to appear in court two days after. When they were arraigned, the prosecutor assailed them with the utmost vehemence. "May it please your Honors," he cried, "these men are great disturbers of the peace. They cannot meet a man upon the road but they must ram a text of Scripture down his throat." It so chanced that one of the prisoners was a very good lawyer, in an unprofessional way, and made a defence that was embarrassing to magistrates who were resolved to find them in the wrong. The court offered, at length, to release them, if they would give their word not to preach for a year. Refusing this, they were ordered into close confinement, and went to Spottsylvania Jail, singing, "Broad is the road that leads to death," amid the jeers of the mob. After remaining in jail (a straw-strewn pen, with grated holes for windows) for forty-three days, preaching daily through the grated apertures to a hooting crowd, they were released.

Worthy John Blair, governor *pro tem.*, to whom accusers and accused hastened to refer the matter, being a man of liberal opinions, sided, as a matter of course, with the Baptists. He told the bigoted squires that the persecution of dissenters only increased their numbers, and that the Baptists had really brought some reprobates to repentance. Nay, said he, if a man of theirs is idle and neglects to provide for his family, he incurs the censure of his brethren, which has had good effects; and he only wished Church people would try the same system. But there was an ignorant multitude in Virginia, as bigoted as the county magnates. Hence this persecution continued, and the case of these very men was tried again at Spottsylvania Court-House, and Patrick Henry rode fifty miles to defend them.

But for the account (missed by Wirt) which has been preserved of Patrick Henry's performance on this occasion, we should not have understood the secret of his power over an assembly. The resistless magic of his oratory was greatly due to artifice, management, extreme and sudden changes in tone, adroit repetition of telling phrases. He entered the court-house while the prosecuting attorney was reading the indictment. He was a stranger to most of the spectators, and, being dressed in the country manner, his entrance excited no remark. When the prosecutor had finished his brief opening, the new-comer took the indictment, and glancing at it with an expression of puzzled incredulity, began to speak in the tone of a man who has just heard something too astounding for belief: —

"May it please your worships, I think I heard read by the prosecutor, as I entered the house, the paper I now hold in my hand. If I have rightly understood, the king's attorney has framed an indictment for the purpose of arraigning and punishing by imprisonment these three inoffensive persons before the bar of this court for a crime of great magnitude, — as disturbers of the peace. May it please the court, what did I hear read? Did I hear it distinctly, or was it a mistake of my own? Did I hear an expression as of a crime, that these men, whom your worships are about to try for misdemeanor, are charged with — with — with WHAT?"

Having delivered these words in a halting, broken manner, as if his mind was staggering under the weight of a monstrous idea, he lowered his voice to its deepest bass; and assuming the profoundest solemnity of manner, answered his own question: "*Preaching the gospel of the Son of God!*"

Then he paused. Every eye was now riveted upon him, and every mind intent; for all this was executed as a Kean or a Siddons would have performed it on the stage, — eye, voice, attitude, gesture, all in accord to produce the utmost possibility of effect. Amid a silence that could be felt, he waved the indictment three times round his head, as though still amazed, still unable to comprehend the charge.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Then he raised his hands and eyes to heaven, and, in a tone of pathetic energy wholly indescribable, exclaimed, "Great God!"

At this point, such was the power of his delivery, the audience relieved their feelings by a burst of sighs and tears. The orator continued: —

"May it please your worships, in a day like this, when truth is about to burst her fetters, when mankind are about to be aroused to claim their natural and inalienable rights, when the yoke of oppression that has reached the wilderness of America, and the unnatural alliance of ecclesiastical and civil power are about to be dissevered, — at *such* a period, when liberty, liberty of conscience, is about to wake from her slumberings, and inquire into the reason of such charges as I find exhibited here to-day in this indictment —" Here occurred another of his appalling pauses, during which he cast piercing looks at the judges and at the three clergymen arraigned. Then resuming, he thrilled every hearer by his favorite device of repetition: "If I am not deceived, — according to the contents of the paper I now hold in my hand, — these men are accused of *preaching the gospel of the Son of God!*" He waved the document three times round his head, as though still *lost* in wonder; and then, with the same electric attitude of appeal to Heaven, he gasped, "Great God!"

This was followed by another burst of feeling from the spectators; and again this master of effect plunged into the tide of his discourse: —

"May it please your worships, there are periods in the history of man when corruption and depravity have so long debased the human character, that man sinks under the weight of the oppressor's hand, — becomes his servile, his abject slave. He licks the hand that smites him. He bows in passive obedience to the mandates of the despot; and, in this state of servility, he receives his fetters of perpetual bondage. But, may it please your worships, such a day has passed. From that period when our fathers left the land of their nativity for these American wilds, — from the moment they placed their feet upon the American continent, — from that moment despotism was crushed, the fetters of darkness were broken, and Heaven decreed that man should be free, — free to worship God according to the Bible. In vain were all their sufferings and bloodshed to subjugate this New World, if we their offspring must still be oppressed and persecuted. But, may it please your worships, permit me to inquire once more, for what are these men about to be tried? This paper says, *for preaching the gospel of the Saviour to Adam's fallen race!*"

Again he paused. For the third time, he slowly waved the indictment round his head; and then, turning to the judges, looking them full in the face, exclaimed with the most impressive effect, "What laws have they violated?" The whole assembly were now painfully moved and excited. The presiding judge ended the scene by saying, "Sheriff, discharge these men."

It was a triumph of the dramatic art. The men were discharged; but not the less, in other counties, did zealous bigots pursue and persecute the ministers of other denominations than their own. It was not till the Revolutionary War absorbed all minds, that Baptists ceased to be imprisoned; nor then were they released from paying tithes to support a church which they neither attended nor approved.

Such was this old Virginia which Thomas Jefferson and his friends were about to try to reform. A slovenly, slatternly old England in the woods, where the abuses and absurdities of the old country were exaggerated, the flower of her young gentlemen now desired to change her into an orderly, industrious, thoughtful, and instructed *New* England. And what a time to begin, in this gloomy autumn of 1776, after New York was lost, and while Washington was on the retreat, fighting as he went, not for victory, but for escape! Perhaps the time was not so

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unpropitious. The minds of men, at periods of public danger, are sometimes in a state of exaltation that renders it possible for them to receive new truth, and gives to persons of understanding an ascendency that is generally awarded only to rank, talent, or executive force.

There were two parties in the Assembly, of course. But posterity cares only for the party that triumphs, — the radical party, the party in the right. In his own day, the conservative usually is, and usually ought to be, uppermost; he represents the human family, which is too large a body to move forward rapidly. The radical usually is one of a small minority, — half a dozen pioneers with broadaxes and leathern aprons, who march some paces in advance of the regiment, and get little besides scratches and hard knocks. But the radical has his revenge. He alone can have any enduring success. If the politics of the United States, from 1787 to 1861, are remembered at all in the general history of the world, the only names likely to be preserved will be those of a few troublesome Abolitionists, Democrats, law-reformers, and free-traders. The triumphant and respectable multitude with whom and for whom these contended, sweet Oblivion will claim them, and have its claim allowed.

To Thomas Jefferson, it is evident, the radicals of Virginia looked as their chief in the work of reform. First among those upon whom he depended for co-operation was that noble-hearted abolitionist, that humane and high-principled radical, that gentleman without pride and without reproach, George Mason of Gunston Hall on the Potomac, — he who wrote to a neighbor, just before the patriotic Fast Day of 1774: "Please to tell my dear little family that I charge them to pay a strict attention to it, and that I desire my three eldest sons and my two eldest daughters may attend church in mourning, if they have it, as I believe they have." It was he who in the Constitutional Convention of 1787 set his face against *all* compromise with slavery, and avowed the opinion that the Southern States ought not to be admitted to the Union unless they would give it up. It was he who drew that Virginia Bill of Rights with which Mr. Bancroft enriches and ennobles the eighth volume (p. 381) of his "History of the United States," — a statement of principles so advanced that mankind can never outgrow them. Broken-hearted by the death of his wife, he would not, he could not, leave his family to serve Virginia in Congress, though the appointment was pressed upon him with tears. But he was in his place in the State Legislature in this critical year, 1776, ready to lend the aid of his humane mind and gifted tongue to every enlightened measure. Nature had done everything for him. A superb man he was, of noblest presence and most engaging dignity; the ablest man in some kinds of debate whom Virginia possessed; healthy-minded, too, as fond of out-of-door sport almost as Washington himself.

George Wythe, the abolitionist who emancipated his own slaves when he found he could not emancipate Virginia, was sure to be on the right side of leading questions, though he was not efficient in carrying measures, — a man of the closet rather than the forum. Governor Patrick Henry's influence, at that period, was given without reserve to liberal measures. These were the great names on the liberal side.

But there was a new member in the House this year, a young man of twenty-five, small of stature, wasted by too much study, not in the least imposing in appearance, and too modest as yet to utter one word in debate, who was destined to be Jefferson's most efficient ally during all his career. This was James Madison, to whom we all owe so much more than we know, whose services are so little remarked because they were so great. He never shone resplendent in debate, he never wrote or spoke anything that was striking or brilliant; but few countries have ever possessed so useful a citizen as he.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

From 1776 to 1817, look where you will in the public affairs of the United States, you find this little man doing, or helping to do, or trying to get a chance to do, the thing that most wanted doing. He was the willing horse who is allowed to draw the load. His heart was in the business of serving his country. He was simply intent on having the right thing done, not to shine in doing it. Among his virtues was his joyous love of a jest, which made him one of the most agreeable of comrades, and preserved his health and spirits to his eighty-fifth year, and lighted up his dying face with smiles. It is a pleasure to me to walk in Madison Square because it bears his name. Of all Jefferson's triumphs, none seems so exceptional as his being able to give to a man so little brilliant and so very useful the conspicuous place he held in the public life of the United States. They met for the first time at this session of the Legislature, and remained friends and political allies for fifty years.

A leader on the conservative side was R. C. Nicholas, for many years the head of the bar in Virginia, a stanch Churchman and gentleman-of-the-old school. But Jefferson feared most the singular, tireless persistence of Edmund Pendleton: a cool, wary, accomplished speaker, he says; "full of resource, never vanquished; for if he lost the main battle, he returned upon you, and regained so much of it as to make it a drawn one, by dexterous manœuvres, skirmishes in detail, and the recovery of small advantages which, little singly, were important all together. You never knew when you were clear of him." Differ as they might, the leaders of the two parties in this House remained excellent friends; the reason being that they were most scrupulously observant of all the forms of courtesy. It was often remarked of Patrick Henry that never, in his most impetuous oratory, was he guilty of personal disrespect to a member of the House. On the contrary, he was profuse in those expressions of regret for being obliged to differ, and of respect for the character of an opponent, which assist so much to make public debate a genuine interchange of thought, and keep it above the contemptible pettiness of personal contention. All the men trained in that old House of Burgesses appear to have caught this spirit. What Jefferson said of Madison's manners in debate describes all of them who are remembered: "Soothing always the feelings of his adversaries by civilities and softness of expression." As to Jefferson himself, not once in his whole public career did he lose or weaken a point by needlessly wounding an opponent's self-love.

In the work of reorganizing Virginia, Jefferson struck first at the system of entail. After a three weeks' struggle, that incubus was lifted. Every acre and every negro in Virginia, by the 1st of November, 1776, was held in fee simple, could be sold for debt, was free to fall into hands that were able to use them. It was the easiest and quickest of his triumphs, though he did not live long enough to outlive the enmity his victory engendered. Some of the old Tories found it in their hearts to exult that he who had disappointed so many fathers, lost his only son before it was a month old; and John Randolph, fifty-five years after, could still attribute all the evils of Virginia to this triumph of "Jefferson and his levelling system."

He found it easier to set free the estates of his countrymen than their minds. Petitions for the repeal of statutes oppressive of the conscience of dissenters came pouring in upon the Assembly from the first day of the session. These, being referred to committee of the whole, led to the severest and longest struggle of the session. "Desperate contests," as Jefferson records, "continued almost daily from the 11th of October to the 5th of December." He desired to sweep away the whole system of restraint and monopoly, and establish perfect liberty of conscience and opinion by a simple enactment of half a dozen lines: —

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, ministry, or place whatsoever; nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burdened in his body or goods; nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion; and the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."

It required more than nine years of effort on the part of Jefferson, Madison, and their liberal friends to bring Virginia to accept this solution of the religious problem, in its simplicity and completeness. All that they could accomplish at this session, after their twenty-five days' debate, was the repeal of the statutes imposing penalties for going to the wrong church, and compelling dissenters to pay tithes. At every subsequent session, for many years, the subject was called up, and, usually, some concession was made to the demands of the liberal party. In 1779, for example, all forced contributions for the support of religion were surrendered. The principle, however, was retained, and, indeed, reasserted, that it was part of the duty of government to regulate religious belief; and the laws remained in force which made it penal to deny the Trinity, and deprived a parent of the custody of his children if he could not subscribe to the leading articles of the Episcopal creed.

We have come now to regard liberty of belief very much as we do liberty of breathing, — as a right too natural, too obvious, to be called in question, — forgetting all the ages of effort and of anguish which it cost to rescue the human mind from the domination of its natural foes. These nine years of Virginia debates have perished; but something of their heat and strenuous vigor survive in a passage which Jefferson inserted in his "Notes on Virginia," written toward the end of the Revolutionary War, and circulated in Virginia a year before the final triumph of religious freedom. The passage is out of place in the work, and it was probably left in, or lugged in, to give aid to Madison in his last contest with the opponents of Jefferson's act. Doubtless it had its influence, coming as it did from a distant land and a name bright with the undimmed lustre of revolutionary successes. Indeed, this vigorous utterance of Thomas Jefferson was the arsenal from which the opponents of the forced support of religion drew their weapons, during the whole period of about fifty years that elapsed between its publication and the repeal of the last State law which taxed a community for the support of the clergy; nor will it cease to have a certain value as long as any man, in any land, is distrusted, or undervalued, or abridged of his natural rights, on account of any opinion whatever.

It is a curiously intense and compact passage, all alive with short, sharp sentences, as if he had struggled to get the whole of the controversy into a few pages. Opinion, he says, is something with which government has nothing to do. "It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg." Constraint makes hypocrites, not converts. A government is no more competent to prescribe beliefs than diet or medicine. "It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself. Subject opinion to coercion, and whom will you make your inquisitors? Fallible men, governed by bad passions, by private as well as public reasons. And why subject it to coercion? Difference of opinion is advantageous to religion. The several sects perform the office of *censor morum* over each other. Is uniformity attainable? Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch toward uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half the world fools, and the other half hypo-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crites; to support roguery and error all over the earth. Let us reflect that it is inhabited by a thousand millions of people; that these profess probably a thousand different systems of religion; that ours is but one of that thousand; that if there be but one right, and ours that one, we should wish to see the nine hundred and ninety-nine wandering sects gathered into the fold of truth. But against such a majority we cannot effect this by force. Reason and persuasion are the only practicable instruments. To make way for these, free inquiry must be indulged; and how can we wish others to indulge it, while we refuse it ourselves?"

Fortunately, he was able to allay the fears of those who believed that virtue would cease to prevail if tithes could not be collected by the sheriff, by pointing to Pennsylvania and New York, where there was no established church, and yet no indications of a decay of morals could be discerned. Religion was well supported, and no more malefactors were hanged than in Virginia. Religious dissension was unknown, for the people had made the happy discovery that the way to silence religious disputes was to take no notice of them; and to extinguish religious absurdity, to laugh at it. He urged his countrymen to have the rights of conscience fixed in law before the war ended, while rulers were honest and people united; for, when peace recalled the people to their usual pursuits, he feared it would be difficult to concentrate attention upon a matter of abstract right. "The shackles which shall not be knocked off at the conclusion of this war will remain on us long, will be made heavier and heavier, till our rights shall revive or expire in a convulsion."

In 1786 the act drawn by Jefferson, entitled by him "An Act for establishing Religious Freedom," became the law of Virginia. The preamble of the act is a forcible statement of the whole argument for freedom of opinion; and, not content with thus fortifying the law, he adds to the act itself a paragraph which, I believe, is unique: "And though we well know that this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding Assemblies, constituted with the power equal to our own, and that, therefore, to declare this act irrevocable would be of no effect in law, yet we are free to declare, and do declare, that the rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind; and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right."

Never, perhaps, since the earliest historic times, has one mind so incorporated itself with a country's laws and institutions as Jefferson's with those of new-born Virginia. In this first month of October, 1776, besides actually accomplishing much, he cut out work enough to keep the best heads of Virginia busy for ten years. It was he who drew the bill for establishing courts of law in the State, and for defining the powers, jurisdiction, and methods of each of them. It was he who caused the removal of the capital from Williamsburg to Richmond, thus originating the plan, since followed by nearly every State, of fixing the capital near the geographical centre, but remote from the centre of trade, capital, and fashion. It may have been best for Virginia, it *was* best for Virginia; but it is not yet certain that a policy is sound which caused the city of Washington to come into being, and which has given a fictitious importance to twenty Harrisburgs and Albanys, besides affording to official misconduct the convenient cloak of distance. Little, however, could Jefferson have foreseen the influence of his action when, in the teeth of the old Tory families planted in the ancient capital, he carried the day for the village of Richmond, and served on the committee that laid out its public square, and placed its unfortunate public buildings.

Another bill introduced by him in this most fruitful month has produced consequences far-reaching and momen-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tous. It was a bill fixing the terms upon which foreigners should be admitted to citizenship in Virginia: Two years' residence; a declaration of intention to live in the State, and a promise of fidelity to it; minor children of naturalized parents, and minors without parents in the State, to become citizens on coming of age, without any legal formality. The principle of this bill and most of its details have been adopted by the national government. In the light of the experience of eighty-five years, and writing on Manhattan Island, we can still say, that the principle of admitting foreigners to citizenship on easy terms, and after a short residence, has been the vital principle of the country's growth; and that Jefferson's bill lacked but one brief clause to make it as safe as it has been powerful: *Provided*, That the foreigner aforesaid proves, to the satisfaction of the court, that he can read English well enough to be independent of all other men in acquiring the political information requisite for intelligent voting." Alas! he did not foresee the Manhattan Island of 1871; nor had a mind yet been created capable of conceiving the idea of admitting to the suffrage hordes of ignorant negroes without the least preliminary preparation.

The laws of Virginia were a chaos of obsolete and antiquated enactments, good for lawyers, bad for clients. Jefferson brought in a bill, in October, 1776, proposing that the House name a committee of five, who should get together the whole mass, revise them, and present for the consideration of the House a Body of Law suited to the altered times and circumstances of the State. The bill being passed, the five revisers were elected by ballot, and Jefferson received the highest number of votes; his colleagues being Edmund Pendleton, George Wythe, George Mason, and T. L. Lee. The two last named, not being lawyers, soon withdrew from the commission, leaving the three others to do the work; Jefferson's portion of which occupied the leisure of two years. It was, indeed, one of the most arduous and difficult labors of his life; for to him was assigned the revision of ancient British law, from the remotest period to the meeting of the first House of Burgesses of Virginia, of which his great-grandfather had been a member, in 1619. Many a long journey it cost these three public-souled gentlemen to get together, in order to discuss principles and compare work; until, in 1779, the revisers were able to present their labors to the Legislature in the convenient form of one hundred and twenty-six bills, to be separately acted upon. These bills were taken up one at a time, as occasion favored or demanded, during the next six or seven years; every enlightened and humane principle or detail having a most persistent and persuasive advocate in James Madison.

Jefferson's part in this revision was most important. The bill for religious freedom, already described, was now completed in the form in which it was finally acted upon in 1786. Against the opposition of Pendleton he carried the extirpation of the principle of primogeniture from the legal system of Virginia. True to his character, Pendleton strove, when the main battle was lost, to save something from the wreck; proposing that the eldest son should, at least, have a double portion. No, said Jefferson; "if the eldest son could eat twice as much, or do double work, it might be a natural evidence of his right to a double portion; but, being on a par in his powers and wants with his brothers and sisters, he should be on a par also in the partition of his patrimony." Against Pendleton, too, Mr. Jefferson prevailed to preserve as much of the letter of ancient law as possible, because the meaning of each word and phrase had been established by judicial decisions. A new code, Mr. Jefferson thought, owing to the imperfection of human language, would "involve us in ages of litigation," until the precise meaning of every word had been settled by decisions and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

commentaries. But this did not apply to modern Virginia statutes, which, he thought, should be reduced to the utmost simplicity and directness.

It is pleasing to notice how cordially the revisers labored together, and how entirely they confided in one another, though differing in opinion. Observe this evidence of it in one of Jefferson's later letters: "We found" (on the final revision) "that Mr. Pendleton had not exactly seized the intentions of the committee, which were to reform the language of the Virginia laws and reduce the matter to a simple style and form. He had copied the acts *verbatim*, only omitting what was disapproved; and some family occurrence calling him indispensably home, he desired Mr. Wythe and myself to make it what we thought it ought to be, and authorized us to report him as concurring in the work."

The bill assigning pains and penalties cost Jefferson much research and thought. The committee swept away at once most of the obsolete cruelties of the ancient code, but some of the revisers were disposed to retain portions of the old system of retaliation: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a poisoner to die by poison, and a maimer to be maimed. Jefferson objected. The infliction of such penalties, he thought, would "exhibit spectacles" the moral effect of which would not be salutary; particularly (he might have added) in a State where every free fight was expected to end in gouging. This part of the scheme was, at his suggestion, reconsidered; so that no sheriff in Virginia has ever been called upon to pry out an eye or bite off a nose.

One of Jefferson's substitutions of new sense for ancient folly in the penalties bill was admirable. Instead of the old laws concerning witchcraft, he suggested this: "All attempts to delude the people, or to abuse their understanding by exercise of the pretended arts of witchcraft, conjuration, enchantment, or sorcery, or by pretended prophecies, shall be punished by ducking and whipping, at the discretion of a jury, not exceeding fifteen stripes." He dropped also the barbarous Jewish penalties for unnatural crimes, on this ground: "Bestiality will ever be properly and severely punished by universal derision." In his preamble to the bill assigning penalties, he asserted doctrines many years in advance of the least monstrous code then existing. At a time when France condemned to death a female servant who stole a spoon, and London saw cartloads of lads drawn to Tyburn for theft, Jefferson began this act by declaring that "cruel and sanguinary laws defeat their own purpose by engaging the benevolence of mankind to withhold prosecution," and that "capital punishments, which exterminate instead of reforming, should be the last melancholy resource against those whose existence has become inconsistent with the safety of their fellow-citizens." In this code, no crimes were capital but murder and treason; and only an overt act was to be accounted treason.

Of the bills drawn by Jefferson, those upon which he most set his heart failed utterly. Only a commonwealth of Jeffersons, Masons, Madisons, and Wythes could have carried into successful operation that magnificent scheme of universal education, embodied in three of the acts drawn by him. He loved knowledge. He loved literature. Writing to Dr. Priestly, in the midst of one of the political frenzies of a later day, he said: "I thank on my knees Him who directed my early education for having put into my possession this rich source of delight," the ability to read Homer in the original; and, during a similar paroxysm of political fury, he wrote to a neighbor, that if anything *could* induce him to sleep another night away from home, it would be his solicitude for the education of youth. He felt that a community needs the whole of the superior intelligence produced in it, and that such intelligence is only made available for good purposes by right culture. His

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plan, therefore, embraced the whole intellect of the State. He proposed to place a common school within reach of every child; to make a high school accessible to every superior youth; to convert William and Mary College into a university; and to found at Richmond a State library to be maintained at a cost of two thousand pounds a year. The whole scheme, which was worked out in great detail, was received, he says, with enthusiasm; but when after the war the expense had to be faced, there was not public spirit enough in the counties to set even the common schools in operation. The scheme failed because there was no middle class in Virginia. In his bill for establishing common schools, a clause was slyly inserted leaving each county free to tax itself for the purpose or not, as the tax-payers should decide. But the tax-payers were planters, served by slaves, not accustomed to regard white trash as fellow-citizens whose welfare was identified with their own. They would not tax themselves for the education of the children of tobacco-rollers, and the plan remained inoperative during Jefferson's whole life.

A remarkable feature of the laws drawn by him during this revision are the preambles — compact, loaded with meaning — with which he prefaced many of them. I think he must have derived the idea from Plato. In preparing himself for work so important, he could not have overlooked the fact that Plato's longest work is entitled LAWS; nor would he have failed to seek light and suggestion from so promising a source.

"And is our legislator," asks the chief person of this Dialogue, "to have no preface to his laws, but to say at once, Do this, avoid that; and then, holding the penalty *in terrorem*, to go on to another law, offering never a word of advice or exhortation to those for whom he is legislating, after the manner of some doctors?" Not so, he thinks. Music has overtures, and discourse its introduction; "but of the tones and higher strain of law, no one has ever yet uttered any prelude." And Plato recurs to the topic, as though it were a favorite idea.* I please myself with thinking that it was such passages of the kindred Greek that induced Jefferson to compose those noble preambles — noble, even when preluding laws too difficult for the time and scene — which illuminate Virginia law-books here and there. The preamble to the Act for establishing Religious Freedom is the weightiest and finest. It touches every point; it all but exhausts the subject.

The slave laws remained to be considered. The revisers, first of all, made a digest of existing laws concerning slaves and slavery, silently dropping such as they deemed inadmissible, and arranging the rest, as was their custom, in the form of a bill. This bill, since it contained nothing novel, nor excluded anything vital, could be expected to pass without opposition. The whole difficulty of the subject they resolved to keep by itself, and concentrate it in an amendment to the bill, designing to present this when the times should admit of the discussion of fundamental changes.

The shade of noble, unpractical Plato must have hovered over the place where this amendment was penned. The community has never existed capable of executing such a scheme. These three benevolent revisers demanded of Virginia a degree of self-control, far-seeing wisdom, and executive genius which a community composed of the elect of the whole human race could not have furnished. All slaves born after the passage of the act were to be free, but they were to remain with their parents during childhood; then educated at the public expense, "in tillage, arts, or sciences, according to their geniuses," until maturity; when they were to be colonized in some convenient place, furnished with arms, implements, and seeds, declared independent, and protected till they were strong enough to

* Jowett's Plato, Vol. IV. pp. 241, 243, 288, 427, etc. (London edition).

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

protect themselves. While Virginia was employed in this most complicated and not inexpensive business, other ships of hers were to repair to other parts of the earth, and bring home "an equal number of white inhabitants, to induce whom to migrate hither proper encouragements were to be proposed." Such ludicrous impossibilities may the wisest of mortals conceive who legislate in the snug retreat of a library, for out-of-door, every-day men, face to face with the universal task!

No enthusiast ever ventured to introduce this amendment into the Legislature. "It was found," wrote Mr. Jefferson in 1821, "that the public mind would not bear the proposition, nor will it bear it even at this day." One thing Jefferson did accomplish. In 1778 he brought in a bill forbidding the further importation of slaves, which was passed without opposition. This was the only important change which was made in the slave system of Virginia during the Revolutionary period.

During the two years employed in the work of revising the laws, there were four or five sessions of the Legislature, all of them attended by Jefferson. His industry was immense. We find him on numberless committees, and reporting every kind of bill; even such as related to the discipline of the militia, the rank of marine officers, and the subsistence of members of Congress. There was no great merit then in punctuality of attendance, for punctuality was compelled. At the calling of the roll on the opening of one session, fifty members were absent. Every man of them was ordered under arrest; nor was one excused until he had risen in his place and stated the reason of his absence. If the reason was accounted sufficient, he was excused without paying the costs of his arrest; if not, he had to pay them. Many and swift journeys fell to Jefferson's lot during this absorbing time, — to Fredericksburg to meet his brother revisers, a rough ride of a hundred and twenty miles; to Williamsburg, for the semiannual session; back suddenly to Monticello, more than once, to attend his sick wife. His only son was born in May, 1777, and lived but seventeen days, though causing his parents many a month of anguish and solicitude. But at home, while the lives of mother and child seemed to hang upon the father's care, in the intervals of watching, he worked at his part of the revision. He told Dr. Franklin, in August, 1777, that the people of Virginia had laid aside the monarchical, and taken up the republican government "with as much ease as would have attended their throwing off an old and putting on a new suit of clothes." It was easy to the people of Virginia, because, at this critical time, they were so happy as to possess a few able, experienced, learned, liberal-minded citizens, who thought no labor severe, no self-denial excessive, if exercised in the service of their country.

So passed the first years of the war. It was an anxious time, of course, to all patriotic hearts, but, to the people of Virginia, not so unhappy a period as we should suppose. *Their* trial was to come. Early rid of the nuisance of Dunmore's hateful presence, they had not, since the burning of Norfolk, witnessed much of the desolations of the war; and if their spirits were depressed sometimes by the mishaps of the armies in the North, good news came occasionally, and came magnified by the distance it had travelled. The rapturous tidings of Burgoyne's surrender was enough of itself to light up half a year, and it was followed by news supposed to be even more important: that of the alliance with France. Virginia was to have her turn, but the time had not yet come.

Jefferson, too, was to experience a most ample share of the bitterness of the war. But, during these first three years of it, absorbed in congenial and elevated labors, happy in the confiding love of the people he served, blest at home in wife and children, he lived very much in his accustomed way; still finding time to record the weather, watch the barometer, observe eclipses,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

measure the rain, compute the force of the wind, study the growth of plants, and caress the violin. He began now to look forward fondly, as so many fond parents have, to the time when his eldest daughter would play the harpsichord, to his accompaniment. His old teacher of the violin, Alberti, was in Paris in 1778. Jefferson wrote him a gay letter, after Burgoyne's surrender, telling him that Americans had lost all apprehensions touching the issue of the war, and he expected to trouble him, within the next two and three years, to send him over a professor competent to teach singing and the harpsichord. Nay, more; he had indulged dreams of a domestic band of music! He told Alberti that, in his retinue of domestic servants, he kept a weaver, a gardener, a cabinet-maker, and a stone-cutter, to whom he meant to add a vine-dresser. Why could not Alberti send him Europeans of these trades, who could also play on instruments? If he could, — behold a band of music upon Monticello, without going "beyond the bounds of an American fortune!" Music, he said, was "the favorite passion of his soul," and yet fortune had cast his lot in a country where it was in a state of "deplorable barbarism." In the same joyous and triumphant summer of 1778, failing to get much good from the eagerly expected and closely observed eclipse of the sun, from want of an accurate clock, he ordered from Rittenhouse the most perfect clock his art could produce, so as to be ready for the next. As to that theodolite of which he had spoken to him in Philadelphia, Mr. Rittenhouse need not trouble himself about it further, for he had since bought one which was just the thing. A British army captured, and the French alliance avowed, who could expect a much longer continuance of the war? Not Jefferson, most sanguine of men.

The surrender of Burgoyne brought unexpected animation to the neighborhood of Monticello, and filled the house upon its summit with agreeable company. The region roundabout being the wheat-field of America, yet too remote from the Northern Army to contribute to its supply, Congress deemed it best, in the winter of 1778–79, to march thither the prisoners of war, English and German, four thousand in number, and establish them near Charlottesville. It was a dreary and weary march, in an inclement season, from Boston to Albemarle, a distance of seven hundred miles; and when the troops reached the plateau selected for them, within sight of Monticello, the barracks were unfinished, no store of food had been gathered, the roads were almost impassable, and "the spell of weather," as Jefferson records, "was the worst ever known within the memory of man." The gentlemen of the county did their utmost to mitigate the situation; and who so prompt with needful aid as the inhabitants of Monticello? Mrs. Jefferson lent her help to the wife of the Hessian General Riedesel in getting her started in housekeeping, at the house of Mazzei, their Italian neighbor, who was just going home to Tuscany on a public errand.

Jefferson himself was lavish of attention to officers and men of both nationalities; and, when they were all settled in quarters, threw open his house, his library, his grounds, his garden, to such of them as could enjoy refined pleasures. There could be no lack of officers, among so many, who could play and sing. Many a delightful concert was improvised at Monticello, when some amateur would play violin duets with Jefferson, and the whole company surround Mrs. Jefferson's harpsichord, and join her in singing. A tradition of these pleasant musical evenings lives to this day. General Dix of New York, as Mr. Randall reports, heard them described by a Captain Bibby, who settled in New York after the war. This captain, himself a good violinist, played many a duet with Jefferson, and considered him the best amateur he had ever heard. A German officer of scientific tastes was much in the library of Monticello, a congenial companion

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to its proprietor. Even General Phillips, commander of the English troops, whom Jefferson describes as the proudest man of the proudest nation on earth, was not proof against his resolute civilities. "The great cause that divides our countries," Jefferson wrote to the General, "is not to be decided by individual animosities. The harmony of private societies cannot weaken national efforts. To contribute by neighborly intercourse and attention to make others happy, is the shortest and surest way of being happy ourselves." General Phillips, proud as he may have been, seems to have assented to this opinion, for we find him writing to Mr. Jefferson in August, 1779: "The British officers intend to perform a play next Saturday at the barracks. I shall be extremely happy to have the honor to attend you and Mrs. Jefferson in my box at the theatre, should you or that lady be inclined to go." * In winding up this polite epistle, the haughty son of Albion was careful to say that he was, "with great *personal* respect," Mr. Jefferson's humble servant. He was the gentleman who, at a later day, addressed Mr. Jefferson as "Thomas Jefferson, Esquire, American Governor of Virginia," and the Governor retorted by addressing him as, "William Phillips, Esquire, commanding the British troops in Virginia."

As the spring advanced, the barracks began to exhibit a truly inviting scene, particularly the quarter occupied by the Germans. The officers, who had hired every available house in the neighborhood, bought cows, sheep, and chickens, cultivated fields, and laid out gardens. If some of the decorous Virginia ladies were a little scandalized at the Amazonian habits of Madame Riedesel, who rode astride with the boldness of a fox-hunter, every one commended the liberality of the general toward his men. He distributed among them two hundred pounds' worth of seeds; and soon the whole region round the barracks was smiling with pretty gardens, and alive with cheerful laborers, conveying to the spectator, as Jefferson said, "the idea of a company of farmers, rather than a camp of soldiers." Some of the officers went to great expense in preparing their houses, even to several thousands of dollars. The health of these troops, thus agreeably situated and pleasantly employed, improved in the most remarkable manner. According to the ordinary rate of mortality, there should have been one death a day; but in three months there were but four deaths among them, and two of those were of infants.

Jefferson wrote in reference to this enchanting scene: "It is for the benefit of mankind to mitigate the horrors of war as much as possible. The practice, therefore, of modern nations, of treating captive enemies with politeness and generosity, is not only delightful in contemplation, but really interesting to all the world, friends, foes, and neutrals."

It is pleasing to reflect that the United States, from the first hour of its existence to the present time, in every instance, and in spite of the bitterest provocation to the contrary in three wars, has treated captives with "politeness and generosity."

The prisoners might well be grateful to Jefferson, for he rendered them a greater service than neighborly attention. A panic fear arose that these four thousand foreign mouths would eat Virginia out of house and home. A famine was dreaded, and Governor Henry was inundated with remonstrances against their longer stay. By the time the barracks were in order, the gardens laid out, and General Riedesel's two hundred pounds' worth of garden seeds all nicely "come up," a terrible rumor ran through the camp, that the governor had yielded to pressure, and was about to order them away. It was Jefferson who interposed in their behalf. He wrote a most vigorous and elaborate statement of the case to Governor Henry, showing the utter groundlessness of the panic, describing the happy situation

* Lossing's American Historical Record, Vol. I. p. 33.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the troops after their winter march of seven hundred miles, and exhibiting the cruel breach of faith it would be to compel them so soon to resume their wanderings. The prisoners' camp was not disturbed, and the Virginians discovered that, if the prisoners ate a good deal of wheat and beef, they circulated a great many gold and silver coins.

What strikes me as peculiar in Jefferson's letter is its extreme politeness. Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry had been friends, comrades, fellow-lodgers, partisans, everything that was intimate and confidential, for nineteen years; but in this letter he keeps in mind that he is a Member for Albemarle writing to his Excellency the Governor of Virginia, and he both begins and ends his epistle with expressions of deference and apology. He "takes the liberty of troubling" the governor with some observations on the subject. The reputation and interest of the country being involved, "it could hardly be deemed an indecent liberty in the most private citizen to offer his thoughts to the consideration of the executive"; and there were particular reasons which justified *him* in so doing, such as his residence near the barracks, his public relation to the people of that county, and his being sure, from his personal acquaintance with the governor and Council, that they would be "glad of information from *any* quarter on a subject interesting to the public." Then, at the end of his letter, after an argument apparently complete and unanswerable, he was "sensible that the same subject might appear to different persons in very different lights." But he hoped that the reasons he had urged, even though to sounder minds they should seem fallacious, would, at least, be plausible enough to excuse his interposition.

There was a reason for this extreme delicacy. The letter was written in March, 1779. The third year of Patrick Henry's governorship would expire in June, and, by the new Constitution, a governor was ineligible after the third term. Jefferson was to succeed him; and it is always a delicate thing for an heir to say or do anything that savors of interference with the management of the estate.

James Parton.

YOUTH AND AGE.

O DAY so gray, you could not chill me,
In that sweet time, far off and fair,
Though loud winds shrieked and echoed shrilly,
And wild rain washed the woodlands bare!
Though sodden fields stretched cold, unvaried,
And birds flew south on weary wing;
For in my happy heart I carried
The hope and promise of the spring.

O day so gay, you cannot thrill me!
Your light and perfume, shower and song,
Your bloom and brightness, only fill me
With old-time memories, sweet and strong.
I would not bid your swift hours tarry,
I do not hasten at your call;
For in my thankful heart I carry
The joy and fruitage of the fall.

Anna Boynton Averill.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JOHN BROWN AND HIS FRIENDS.*

AT the beginning of the year 1858, nobody in Massachusetts, except here and there a fugitive slave perhaps, had heard of John Brown's plan for the invasion of Virginia, though he had made much progress toward its execution. He had enlisted men and engaged the English Garibaldian, Hugh Forbes, to drill them; but this engagement was quite unknown to Brown's Massachusetts friends, who had never seen Forbes, and only heard of him casually and incidentally. They had never been consulted by Brown in regard to paying Forbes, nor, of course, had Brown given Forbes any assurances that they would pay him the salary stipulated between Forbes and Brown; of which, in fact, they knew nothing whatever. It was therefore with much surprise and mystification that, about Christmas-time, 1857, Dr. S. G. Howe and Mr. Sanborn began to receive passionate and denunciatory letters, written by Forbes, complaining of ill-treatment at their hands, and assuming to hold them responsible for the termination of his engagement with Brown, by which, he said, he had been reduced to poverty, and his family in Paris, deprived of pecuniary aid from him, had suffered great hardship. Two of these letters were addressed to Senator Sumner, and were forwarded by him to Dr. Howe and Mr. Sanborn, who, in great ignorance as to what such abusive epistles meant, answered them with some curtness and severity. This correspondence temporarily closed in January, 1858, and the substance of it was communicated to Brown, then in Kansas, with the request that he would explain the meaning of Forbes's anger, and state what their real relations with each other were. Before replying to this request, which probably was not received till weeks afterward, Brown suddenly left Kansas without the knowledge of his friends there, and appeared, in the beginning of February, 1858, at the house of Frederick Douglass in Rochester, New York. From there he wrote, February 2, to Theodore Parker, George L. Stearns, F. B. Sanborn, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, asking them to aid him in raising a small sum of money to carry out "an important measure in which the world has a deep interest." This, he tells Mr. Parker, is his only errand at the East, and he goes on: "I have written some of our mutual friends in regard to it, but none of them understand my views so well as you do, and I cannot explain without their committing themselves more than I know of their doing. I have heard that Parker Pillsbury, and some others in your quarter, hold out ideas similar to those on which I act, but I have no personal acquaintance with them, and know nothing of their influence or means. Do you think any of our Garrisonian friends, either at Boston, Worcester, or in any other place, can be induced to supply a little 'straw,' if I will absolutely make 'bricks'? I must beg of you to consider this communication strictly confidential, unless you know of parties who will feel and act and hold their peace." *

Brown's letters of the same date and for a few weeks after, to Colonel Higginson and Mr. Sanborn, were of a similar tenor, though rather more explicit, but they conveyed no distinct intimation of his plans. He wrote to Higginson, February 2, from Rochester: "I am here, concealing my whereabouts for good reasons (as I think), not, however, from any anxiety about my personal safety. I have been told that you are both a true *man* and a true *abolitionist*, and I partly believe the whole story. Last fall I undertook

* See "John Brown in Massachusetts," in the Atlantic Monthly for April, 1872.

* Weiss's Life of Theodore Parker, Vol. II. pp. 163, 164.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to raise from five hundred to one thousand dollars for *secret service*, and succeeded in getting five hundred dollars. I now want to get, for the perfecting of *by far* the most important undertaking of my whole life, from five hundred to eight hundred dollars within the next sixty days. I have written Rev. Theodore Parker, George L. Stearns, and F. B. Sanborn, Esquires, on the subject, but do not know as either Mr. Stearns or Mr. Sanborn are abolitionists. I suppose they are." On the 12th of February he wrote again in response to a remark in Higginson's reply about the Underground Railroad in Kansas: "Railroad business on a somewhat extended scale is the identical object for which I am trying to get means. I have been connected with that business, *as commonly conducted*, from my boyhood, and never let an opportunity slip. I have been operating to some purpose the past season, but I now have a measure on foot that I feel sure would awaken in you something more than a common interest, if you could understand it. I have just written my friends G. L. Stearns and F. B. Sanborn, asking them to meet me for consultation at ——. I am very anxious to have you come along, certain as I feel that you will never regret having been one of the council." It was inconvenient for any of the persons addressed to take the long journey proposed, and on the 13th Mr. Sanborn wrote for himself and Mr. Stearns, inviting Brown to visit Boston, and offering to pay his travelling expenses. To this request Brown replied, February 17th: "It would be almost impossible for me to pass through Albany, Springfield, or any of those parts, on my way to Boston, and not have it known; and my reasons for keeping quiet are such that, when I left Kansas, I kept it from every friend there; and I suppose it is still understood that I am hiding somewhere in the Territory; and such will be the idea until it comes to be generally known that I am in these parts. I want to continue that impression as long as I can, or for the present. I want very much to see Mr. Stearns, and also Mr. Parker, and it may be that I can before long; but I must decline accepting your kind offer at present, and, sorry as I am to do so, ask you both to meet me by the middle of next week at the furthest. I wrote Mr. Higginson of Worcester to meet me also. It may be he would come on with you. My reasons for keeping still are sufficient to keep me from seeing my wife and children, much as I long to do so. I will endeavor to explain when I see you." This letter was written from Rochester.

There was no doubt in the mind of Mr. Sanborn that the promised explanation would clear up the mystery of Forbes's letters, which had grieved as well as annoyed him and the few friends of Brown in Boston who had seen them. Therefore, when Mr. Stearns was still unable to accept this second and pressing request from Brown for a meeting in Central New York, Mr. Sanborn determined to go, and invited Colonel Higginson to join him at Worcester on the 20th, but in fact he made the journey alone, and reached the place of meeting on the evening of Washington's birthday, February 22d. A few friends of Brown were there gathered, among them another Massachusetts man, Mr. Edwin Morton of Plymouth, now of Boston, but then residing in the family of Mr. Gerrit Smith as tutor and private secretary.* In

* Morton and Sanborn had been classmates at Harvard College, where they graduated in 1855, and have ever since been intimate friends and correspondents. Much of the subsequent correspondence with Brown and his friends passed through their hands, and it is probable they may have the key to anything that is still unexplained in the movements of Captain Brown, during the twenty months that followed the February conference about to be described. Both were young men, Sanborn being twenty-six and Morton a year younger; and both had been abolitionists from boyhood. Both also were of unmixed New England descent, as John Brown was; Morton being descended from a kinsman of Nathaniel Morton, the first secretary of Plymouth Colony, and his friend from the founder and first minister of the old New Hampshire plantation of Hampton. The other Massachusetts members of Brown's secret committee, Parker, Higginson, Stearns, and Howe, were of the same Puritan ancestry; and it may be worth mentioning that,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the long winter evening which followed, the whole outline of Brown's campaign in Virginia was laid before the little council, to the astonishment and almost the dismay of all present. The constitution which he had drawn up for the government of his men, and such territory as they might occupy, and which was found among his papers at the Kennedy Farm, was exhibited by Brown, its provisions recited and explained, the proposed movements of his men indicated, and the middle of May was named as the time of the attack. To begin this hazardous adventure he asked for but eight hundred dollars, and would think himself rich with a thousand. Being questioned and opposed by his friends, he laid before them in detail his methods of organization and fortification; of settlement in the South, if that were possible, and of retreat through the North, if necessary; and his theory of the way in which such an invasion would be received in the country at large. He desired from his Massachusetts friends a patient hearing of his statements, a candid opinion concerning them, and, if that were favorable, then that they should co-operate with him and persuade others to do so. This was the important business which he had to communicate on the anniversary of Washington's birthday.

After what has passed in the last ten years, no one can picture to himself the startling effect of such a plan, heard for the first time in the dismal days of Buchanan's administration, when Floyd was Secretary of War, and Jefferson Davis and Senator Mason omnipotent in Congress. Those who listened to Captain Brown had been familiar with the bold plots and counter-plots of the Kansas border, and had aided the escape of slaves in various parts of the South. But to strike at once at the existence of slavery, by an organized force, acting for years, if need be, on the dubious principles of guerilla warfare, and exposed, perhaps, to the whole power of the country, was something they had never contemplated. That was the long-meditated plan of a poor, obscure, old man, uncertain at best of another ten years' lease of life, and yet calmly proposing an enterprise which, if successful, might require a whole generation to accomplish. His friends listened until late at night, proposing objections and raising difficulties, but nothing shook the purpose of the old Puritan. To every objection he had an answer; every difficulty had been foreseen and provided for; the great difficulty of all, the apparent hopelessness of undertaking anything so vast with such slender means, he met with the words of Scripture, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" and "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

To all suggestions of delay until a more favorable time, he would reply, "I am nearly sixty years old; I have desired to do this work for many years; if I do not begin soon, it will be too late for me." He had made nearly all his arrangements; he had so many hundred weapons, so many men enlisted, all that he wanted was the small sum of money. With that he would open his campaign with the spring, and he did not doubt that his enterprise would pay. But those who heard him, while they looked upon the success of Brown's undertaking as a great blessing and relief to the country, felt also that to fail, contending against such odds, might hazard for many years the cause of freedom and union. They had not yet fully attained the sublime faith of Brown when he said, "A few men in the right, and knowing they are right, can overturn a king. Twenty men in the Alleghanies could break slavery to pieces in two years."

On the 23d of February the discussion was renewed, and, as usually happened when he had time enough, Captain Brown began to prevail over the

while Higginson's earliest American ancestor was the first minister of Salem, Sanborn's ancestor, Rev. Stephen Bachiler, was the first minister of Lynn, and probably had among his parishioners there, in 1635-36, Thomas Parker, the first American ancestor of Theodore Parker.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

objections of his friends. At any rate, they saw that they must either stand by him, or leave him to dash himself in pieces alone against the fortress which he was determined to assault. To withhold aid would only delay him, not prevent him; nothing short of betraying him to the enemy would do that. As the sun was setting over the snowy hills of the region where they met, the Massachusetts delegate walked for an hour with the principal person in the little council of war, leaving Captain Brown to discuss religion with an old captain of Wellington's army who, by chance, was a guest in the house. The elder of the two, of equal age with Brown, and for many years a devoted abolitionist, said, "You see how it is; our old friend has made up his mind to this course of action, and cannot be turned from it. We cannot give him up to die alone; we must stand by him. I will raise so many hundred dollars for him; you must lay the case before your friends in Massachusetts and see if they will do the same. I see no other way." The same conclusion had been reached by his younger companion, for himself, and he engaged to bring the scheme at once to the attention of the three Massachusetts men to whom Brown had written, and also of Dr. S. G. Howe, who had sometimes favored action almost as extreme as this proposed by Brown.

Sanborn returned to Boston on the 25th of February, and on the same day communicated the enterprise to Theodore Parker and Colonel Higginson. At the suggestion of Parker, Brown, who had gone to Brooklyn, New York, was invited to visit Boston secretly, and did so early in March, taking a room at the American House, in Hanover Street. He registered himself as "J. Brown," instead of writing out the customary "John" in full, and remained for the most part in his room (No. 126) during the four days of his stay. Parker was one of the first persons to call on him, and promised aid at once. He was deeply interested in the project, but not very sanguine of its success; he wished to see it tried, however, and gave Brown substantial proof of his interest and support; while Brown in return gave him the fullest confidence in respect to the whole movement. Parker left the country, never to return, early in the following year; but he was kept informed in a general way of the progress of the affair, and as late as September 29, 1859, three weeks before the outbreak at Harper's Ferry, he wrote to inquire what Captain Brown was doing, and said: "I wish I had something now to drop into the hat for the same end. Tell me how our little speculation in wool goes on, and what dividend accrues therefrom."

Two years after the death of Parker, in 1860, one of his executors found among his papers this letter of Brown's, which has never been printed, written just before his visit to Boston, in March, 1858. It was not addressed to Mr. Parker, but had been sent to him by the person who received it.

—— N. Y. 24th Feb'y, 1858.

MY DEAR FRIEND: — Mr. X. has taken the liberty of saying to me that you felt half inclined to make a common cause with me. I *greatly rejoice* at this; for I believe when you come to look at the *ample field* I labor in, and the rich harvest which (not only this entire country, but) the whole world during the present and future generations *may reap* from its successful cultivation, you will feel that you are out of your element, until you find you are in it, an entire unit. What an inconceivable amount of good you might so effect, by your *counsel, your example, your encouragement*, your *natural and acquired ability* for active service. And then, how very little we can possibly lose? Certainly the cause is enough to *live* for, if not to —— for. I have only had *this one* opportunity in a life of nearly sixty years; and could I be continued ten times as long again, I might not again have another equal opportunity. God has honored but comparatively a *very small* part of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mankind with any possible chance for such mighty and soul-satisfying rewards. But, my dear friend, if you should make up your mind to do so, I trust it will be wholly from the promptings of your own spirit, after having *thoroughly counted* the cost. I would *flatter no man* into such a measure, if I could do it ever so easily.

I *expect nothing* but to "endure hardness," but I expect to effect a mighty conquest, even though it be like the last victory of Samson. I felt for a number of years *in earlier life*, a steady, strong desire to *die*, but since I saw any prospect of becoming a "reaper" in the *great* harvest, I have not only felt quite willing to *live*, but have enjoyed life much; and am now rather anxious to live for *a few* years more.

Your sincere Friend,
JOHN BROWN.*

In a collection of Brown's letters, this would rank among the first for the light it sheds on his life and character. The reference to his longing for death in his youth is one of the few revelations made by him of his early mental struggles, and, no doubt, means that he was unfortunate in love, and in other ways found the world a melancholy place. His early religious experiences, occurring at the same period, must have deepened the sadness which sprang from disappointed affection; but the strength of his religious faith finally overcame it, and gave him peace of mind. The allusion to the last victory of Samson is repeated in one of his letters from prison, in November, 1859, when he wrote to his old schoolmaster, Rev. H. L. Vaill, "Had Samson kept to his determination of not telling Delilah wherein his great strength lay, he would probably have never overturned the house." This comparison of himself to Samson was not from vanity, but under a profound sense of a divine mission, like that of the Hebrew champion; and he never entered upon his dangerous expeditions in Kansas or elsewhere, without thoughts to which Milton has given utterance in his "Samson Agonistes": —

> "Happen what may, of me expect to hear
> Nothing dishonorable, impure, unworthy
> Our God, our law, my nation or myself, —
> The last of me or no I cannot warrant."

Captain Brown reached Boston Thursday, March 4, 1858, and left it Monday, the 8th, for Philadelphia. On Friday and Saturday, in Boston, he had seen at his hotel Theodore Parker, Dr. Howe, Messrs Sanborn, Stearns, and Higginson, and perhaps one or two other persons. He kept himself private, however, and did not, as when he was in Boston a year before, go to the Sunday-evening reception at Mr. Parker's in Exeter Place, where he had met Mr. Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and other antislavery leaders in 1857. He therefore communicated with Parker on Sunday, March 7th, by letter; and this letter, an unusually long one for Brown, is printed in Weiss's "Life of Parker."* He begins by an apology for writing letters on Sunday, and goes on to ask Parker to draw up for him an address to the officers and soldiers of the United States Army, whom he soon expected to meet as opponents, as he had in Kansas. Such an address had been prepared six months before by Forbes, and a copy sent to Parker; but Brown was not satisfied with this, and in this letter gives directions for composing a better address, and also another paper "intended for all persons, old and young, male and female, slaveholding and non-slaveholding"; and a third tract "for every male and female" prisoner on being set at liberty, and to be read by them during confinement." It does not appear that Parker ever tried his hand at these papers,

* The original of this letter is now in the possession of Mrs. Mary E. Stearns of Medford, the wife of George L. Stearns, who, not less than her lamented husband, was a generous and true friend of Brown. To her we are indebted for Brackett's noble bust of Brown, which stands in her house

* Vol. II. p. 164. The "address you saw last season," mentioned in this letter, is the same spoken of in the letter of September 11, 1857, on page 162.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or that they were prepared by any person. It may be worth mentioning, however, that Parker sent Brown from his library on this Sunday the report of McClellan on the European armies, which was then a new book, and was thought likely to be of service to Brown. At the same time Brown praised Plutarch's Lives as a book he had read with great profit for its military and moral lessons, and particularly mentioned the life of Sertorius, the Roman commander who so long carried on a partisan warfare in Spain. He wished to get a few copies of Plutarch for his men to read in camp, and inquired particularly about the best edition.

Although Brown communicated freely to the persons above named his plans of attack and defence in Virginia, it is not known that he spoke to more than one person in Boston of his purpose of surprising the arsenal and town of Harper's Ferry. Both Dr. Howe and Mr. Stearns testified before Mason's committee, in 1860, that they were ignorant of Brown's plan of attack, which was true so far as the place and manner of beginning the campaign were concerned. It is probable that in 1858 Brown had not definitely resolved to seize Harper's Ferry, since, when he spoke of it to the person referred to, he put it as a question, and did not seem to have made up his mind to a course of action so immediately hazardous. He then argued that it would strike great terror into the whole slaveholding class to find that an armed force had strength enough to capture a place so important and so near Washington; and it was to inspire terror, rather than to possess himself of the arms there, that he then proposed to capture the arsenal. It is believed that Theodore Parker was aware of this half-formed plan of Brown's, but it was not communicated to his men until a year and a half later, or just before the attack was actually made. Charles Plummer Tidd, one of Brown's men, who escaped from Harper's Ferry, afterwards enlisted in a Massachusetts regiment under the name of Plummer, and died under Burnside in North Carolina, is authority for this statement. He said that when Brown called his small company together in October, 1859, on the Maryland shore of the Potomac, and disclosed to them his plan for the capture of the town, they all declared that it would be fatal to attempt it, and refused to take part in it; even his own sons, except Owen, being unwilling to follow their father to what they said would be certain defeat and death. But Brown had now decided upon his course, and adhered to it inflexibly; he would make the attack with a single man, if only one man would obey him. His sons, finding their father so determined, and knowing how impossible it was to change his purpose, first gave in their adhesion; they believed it to be a fatal scheme, but they would not desert him. Gradually all the others came round to the same opinion, and the attack was made with precisely the result that Brown's followers had predicted. We have no reason to doubt that Tidd's statement was true in substance.

On the departure of Brown from Boston in March, 1858, the five persons mentioned — Parker, Howe, Higginson, Sanborn, and Stearns — formed themselves into a secret committee to raise for him the money (now set at $ 1,000) which it was agreed should be raised in New England. Each of the five was to raise $ 100, and as much more as he could, Dr. Howe having hopes of securing a larger subscription from his friend Mr. George R. Russell. Mr. Stearns was made treasurer of the committee, and ten days after Brown's departure $ 250 had been paid in. By the 1st of April $ 375 had been collected, and on the 20th of April $ 410, of which Stearns, Parker, and Higginson had each paid $ 100, Sanborn $ 60, and Howe $ 50. Stearns pledged $ 200 more, and Brown had collected $ 260 outside of New England; so that the small sum judged necessary for beginning the enterprise was nearly made up, either in money or pledges, before

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the 1st of May, at which time Brown was on his way from Iowa to Ohio, with the arms that had been stored in Iowa, and with some of his men. He was to enlist others in Canada about May 8th, and to strike his first blow in the latter part of the same month. On the 28th of April Brown was in Chicago; on the 2d of May at Chatham, in Canada. But, meanwhile, a formidable obstacle had appeared. Hugh Forbes interposed again, writing from Washington, and threatened to disclose the whole plan to the Republican leaders, and even to the government.

Forbes's letters, as before, were addressed to Howe and Sanborn, neither of whom had yet seen him, but who both knew now, from Brown, what the relation had been between Forbes and himself. In these letters of April and May Forbes insisted that Brown's enterprise should stop, that Brown himself should be dismissed as the leader of the movement, and Forbes be put in his place; and these demands were accompanied by a threat of making public the whole transaction, so far as it had gone. To increase the difficulties of the situation, Forbes had evidently learned, from some quarter, of the countenance given to Brown, since the 1st of March, by his Boston committee. On the 2d of May these letters were submitted to this committee, Howe, Parker, Sanborn, and Stearns being present, and Higginson being informed of them by mail. Parker, Sanborn, and Stearns at once said that the blow must be deferred till another year, and in this opinion Howe partially coincided. Higginson thought otherwise, and so did Brown, who declared that he would go forward, in spite of Forbes and his threats, if the money promised him should be furnished. Here, however, another difficulty sprang up. Forbes, early in May, carried out his threat so far as to inform Senators Hale, Seward, and Wilson and Dr. Bailey, in general terms, of Brown's purposes, and Wilson wrote to Dr. Howe, earnestly protesting against any such demonstration. As the rifles which had been purchased by the Massachusetts Kansas Committee and intrusted to Brown by them were still, so far as Senator Wilson and the public knew, the property of that committee (though really, as has been explained, the personal property of Mr. Stearns, the chairman), it would expose the Kansas Committee, who were ignorant of Brown's later plans, to suspicions of bad faith, if those arms were used by him in any expedition to Virginia. This awkward complication seems to have decided Dr. Howe in favor of postponing the attack, and both he and Mr. Stearns, as members of the Kansas Committee, wrote to Brown that the arms must not be used for the present, except for the defence of Kansas.* Brown saw that nothing further could then be done, and yielded, though with regret, to the postponement. About the 20th of May Mr. Stearns met Brown in New York, and arranged that hereafter the custody of the Kansas rifles should be Brown's, as the agent of Stearns, the real owner, and not of the nominal owners, the Kansas Committee. On the 24th of May a meeting of the Boston secret committee, with one of the principal friends of Brown's plan outside of New England, took place at the Revere House in Boston, — Parker, Howe, Sanborn, and Stearns being present, as before; and it was agreed that the execution of the plan should be postponed till the spring of 1859. In the mean time a larger sum of money — from two to three thousand dollars — was to be raised, and Brown was to throw Forbes off his track by returning to Kansas and engaging in the defence of the Free-State men on the border; the alleged property of the Kansas Committee was to be so transferred as to relieve that committee of all responsibility, and the secret committee were, in future, to know nothing in detail of Brown's plans. Brown was not himself present at this Revere House meet-

* The letters on this subject are printed in Senator Mason's Report (36th Cong. Senate Rep. Com. No. 278), pp. 176, 177.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing, but came to Boston the next week, and was at the American House May 31st. Here he met all the committee, Higginson included; and, in the two or three days that he stayed, the Revere House arrangement was completed. He received the sole custody of the arms which had belonged to the Kansas Committee, and five hundred dollars beside; was to go to Kansas at once, but after that to use his own discretion; and, though still believing the postponement unwise, he left New England in good spirits the first week in June. He reached Kansas June 26th, with about ten men, and in a week or two after was on the border, near the scene of the Marais des Cygnes murders of May 11th. Remaining in that vicinity, guarding the Free-State settlers for about two months, most of that time he was himself ill with ague. On the 10th of September he was at Osawatomie, whence he wrote, "I have often met the 'notorious' Montgomery,* and think very favorably of him." He was associated with Montgomery in the border warfare of the autumn and winter of 1858, and finally, just before Christmas, made his famous incursion into Missouri, and brought away a party of slaves, with whom he travelled in January and February, 1859, from the border of Southern Kansas, through Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, and Michigan, to Detroit, where he arrived March 12th, and landed his fugitives safely in Canada. In the latter part of March, 1859, he was at Cleveland, where he sold publicly the horses he had brought from Missouri. In April he visited his family at North Elba, and in the early part of May was in Boston, where he remained for more than three weeks, visiting his friends in the city and its vicinity, and making final arrangements for his Virginia expedition. Before leaving Boston for the last time, Wednesday, June 1, 1859, the sum of $2,000, which had been promised him at the Revere House meeting a year before, was made up and placed to his credit. More than half this sum — $1,200 — was the gift of George L. Stearns, who must have furnished the old hero, first and last, at least $10,000 in money and arms. Of the other $800, half was raised in Massachusetts, by private subscription or at public meetings, of which he held several during this visit. He spoke in the Town Hall at Concord (where he spent a portion of his last birthday*) on Sunday evening, May 8th, to a large audience, hastily gathered; for he had arrived in town unexpectedly the night before, from North Elba. The fame of his last exploit in Kansas had preceded him everywhere, and there was much eagerness to hear what he would say about it. He described briefly his expedition into Missouri, and the way in which he had brought off the party of slaves; but when he went on to assert that it was right to repeat such incursions, and to take property, or even life, in forcibly setting slaves free, his audience winced under it. They applauded his successful deed, but were not ready to encourage its repetition. Some agreed with him, however, and a small contribution was raised at the meeting. He left Concord at noon the next day, — his birthday, — and never returned thither.

John Brown also spoke at one of the Boston Anniversary meetings in Tremont Temple, the last week in this same May, and was present on Saturday, May 28th, at the weekly dinner of the "Bird Club," which then met at the Parker House. The late Governor Andrew was a member of this club, as were Dr. Howe and Mr. Sanborn, and Mr. Stearns joined it on this particular day, having gone there to meet or escort his friend Brown. Governor Andrew was not present at this meeting of the club, but it was probably on the following Sunday evening that he met Brown for the first and last time, at a friend's house. In his testimony before Senator Mason's

* This was James Montgomery of Kansas, a brave partisan, afterwards colonel of a colored regiment in South Carolina. He has lately died in Kansas.

* Brown was born May 9, 1800, and was in his sixtieth year at his death.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

committee, in February, 1860, Mr. Andrew made this statement respecting his own contribution to Brown's fund:*—

"After having met Captain Brown one Sunday evening at a lady's house, where I made a social call with my wife, I sent him twenty-five dollars as a present. I did it because I felt ashamed, after I had seen the old man and talked with him, and come within the reach of the personal impression which I find he very generally made on people, that I had never contributed anything directly towards his assistance, as one who I thought had sacrificed and suffered so much for the cause of freedom and of good order and good government in the Territory of Kansas. He was, if I may be allowed to use that expression, a very magnetic person, and I felt very much impressed by him. I confess I did not know how to understand the old gentleman fully, because when I hear a man talk upon great themes, touching which I think he must have deep feeling, in a tone perfectly level, without emphasis and without any exhibition of feeling, I am always ready to suspect that there is something wrong in the man's brain. I noticed that the old gentleman, in conversation, scarcely regarded other people, was entirely self-poised, self-possessed, sufficient to himself, and appeared to have no emotion of any sort, but to be entirely absorbed in an idea which preoccupied him and seemed to put him in a position transcending an ordinary emotion and ordinary reason. . . . . In parting with him, as I heard he was a poor man, I expressed my gratitude to him for having fought for a great cause with earnestness, fidelity, and conscientiousness, while I had been quietly at home, earning my money and supporting my family in Boston, under my own vine and fig-tree, with nobody to molest or make me afraid. . . . . I am constitutionally peaceable, and by opinion very much of a peace man, and I have very little faith in deeds of violence, and very little sympathy with them, except as the extremest and direst necessity. My sympathy, so far as I sympathized with Captain Brown, was on account of what I believed to be heroic and disinterested services in defence of a good and just cause, and in support of the rights of persons who were treated with unjust aggression."

This is a statement truly characteristic, not only of Governor Andrew, but of Brown as he was viewed by many people in Massachusetts; and such small sums as were given him in 1858 and 1859, by persons not acquainted with his plans, were mostly given under such impressions as are here so generously described. The whole amount of these contributions, however, did not exceed five hundred dollars in Massachusetts, and probably were less than half that sum. Out of a little more than four thousand dollars in money which passed through the hands of the secret committee, in aid of his Virginia enterprise, or was known to them as contributed, at least thirty-eight hundred dollars were given with a clear knowledge of the use to which it would be put. The gifts of arms made by Mr. Stearns amounted in value to twice as much perhaps, and these also were contributed with a full understanding that they might be used as they were.*

Brown's hotel, during his last visit to Boston, was the United States House. He was attended, generally, in his movements about the city and its neighborhood, by a faithful henchman, Jerry Anderson, a youth from Indiana who was shot at Harper's Ferry. Both were in rustic dress, but Brown, from his marked aspect and his flowing gray beard (which he first began to wear in Kansas in the summer of 1858), attracted much attention in the streets. He has been described by Judge Hoar (who had seen him in Concord, and perhaps had contributed to his fund from the same motives as

* Senate Rep. Com., No. 278, 36th Congress, page 192.

* The biographer of George Stearns, when his Life shall be written, should not omit the list of his contributions to Brown and his cause.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Governor Andrew), in one of these street rambles, as calmly walking up Court Street in the midst of the hurrying throng, with his jack-knife in one hand and an apple in the other, which he was peeling and eating, quite unconscious of observation, while his young henchman, less accustomed to cities, walked a little behind him, gazing up at the signs and windows. Another remembers him plodding his way to the Providence Railroad Station, burdened with a heavy carpet-bag, and still escorted by his body-guard. At this time he always went heavily armed, being proclaimed an outlaw by President Buchanan, who offered three thousand dollars for his arrest, and by the governor of Missouri, who offered two hundred and fifty dollars more. When this fact was mentioned to Brown, he sometimes said, in his dry way, that he would pay *two dollars and fifty cents* to anybody who would safely lodge James Buchanan in any jail in the free States. He moved about in Massachusetts entirely without fear or precaution, except his pistols and his henchman, and at this time always went by his own name. It is believed that no effort to arrest him was made outside of Kansas.

In course of his stay in Boston he spent an evening at the house of a gentleman where William Hunt, the painter, was also a guest, and an appointment was made with Brown that he should give Hunt a sitting for his portrait. It is unfortunate that this sitting never took place, for his portrait by Hunt would now be the best representation of him in his last year. Brackett, the sculptor, whose fine bust of him has already been mentioned, also met him at this time; but the studies and measurements for his bust were made in a brief visit to Brown in his cell at Charlestown in the following November. Brown sat for his photograph to a Boston artist named Heywood, and it is from this picture, a half-length standing figure, with the hands behind the back, and the face turned a little aside from a front view, that all the common portraits of him are taken. It was used by Brackett in modelling his bust, in which, however, the features are somewhat idealized. The suit in which this picture was taken is the same that he wore in Boston two years before, and he was wearing a portion of it when captured at Harper's Ferry. The attitude chosen was a common one with him, and some of our readers may remember him pacing a hall, a prairie, or a hotel corridor with his hands thus clasped behind him.

Leaving Boston on the first day of June, 1859, Brown went to Collinsville in Connecticut, where he arrived June 3d, and renewed his old contract for a thousand pikes, which were made by Charles Blair of that town, and forwarded in August and September, to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, whence they were taken to the neighborhood of Harper's Ferry. In the interval between June and September Brown had moved his men and arms from Canada and Ohio to Chambersburg, and thence to the Kennedy Farm, on the Maryland side of the Potomac, about five miles from Harper's Ferry. This farm was rented by Brown early in July, and its two farm-houses were occupied by him and his men for the three months preceding his attack, October 16th. During this time Brown was frequently absent, often in Chambersburg, to which place all his letters were sent. About a month after he took possession of the Kennedy Farm his supply of money gave out, and he wrote earnestly to his Boston committee for three hundred dollars, with which he could begin his campaign. He made no further communication of his plans, nor was it known to any of his Massachusetts friends exactly where he was or what he was doing. The money asked for was raised by Howe, Stearns, Sanborn, and Higginson, and sent to Chambersburg in small drafts, as requested, the last of it reaching Brown about the 20th of September. In the mean time he had been visited at Chambersburg by Frederick Douglass, who was previously acquainted with the general plan

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of action, but does not seem to have been wholly satisfied with what Brown communicated to him at their last interview. The time for striking the blow was still delayed, more from want of money than for any other reason; and it might have been postponed till the spring of 1860, perhaps, but for another remittance from Massachusetts under circumstances so singular as to be regarded by Brown's friends as providential.

There was then in Boston a young man, who afterwards died as a soldier in the Union Army, a grandson of Francis Jackson, the famous antislavery leader. He was named for his grandfather, Francis Jackson Merriam. His father was dead, and he had inherited a small property, which he was eager to devote to some practical enterprise for freeing the slaves. He was at this time twenty-two years old, enthusiastic and resolute, but with little judgment, and in feeble health; altogether, one would say, a very unfit person to take part actively in Brown's enterprise. He had heard something of this from James Redpath, with whom he had travelled in Hayti, and was fully determined to join Brown's party. Early in October, having learned in some way that Brown was to be seen at Chambersburg, young Merriam called upon Sanborn, who had never seen him before, though acquainted with his family, and declared his purpose of visiting Brown, offering himself and his little fortune for his cause. Sanborn tried in vain to dissuade him from going, and suggested that he should first invest a portion of his money, and be guided by circumstances as to the future. This good advice Merriam declined, and insisted that he should start at once to find Brown, which he did, leaving Boston on the 7th of October. By Sanborn's advice, he called to see Colonel Higginson at Worcester, on his way, and was still more unfavorably received by that gentleman, who strongly opposed his wild scheme. He went on, however, met Brown at Chambersburg about a week before the attack was made, gave him six hundred dollars in gold, and joined the little band at Kennedy's. His money reached Brown but a day or two before the attack, and was probably nearly all that the military chest of the invaders of Virginia contained when they crossed the Potomac on Sunday evening, October 16, 1859, to capture the town of Harper's Ferry. Merriam himself was not in the attacking party, but remained to guard the arms, with Cook, Tidd, Owen Brown, Barclay Coppoc, and O. P. Anderson, at the school-house on the Maryland side. He escaped with his companions, all of whom, except Cook, got safely away.

Merriam, after many adventures, reached Canada safely; but the scenes he had witnessed, and the fate of his leader and comrades, unsettled his mind completely. He planned another raid into the slave States, and at the risk of his life, if captured, he returned to Boston early in December to urge Brown's friends there to aid him in the mad enterprise. It so happened that he reached Boston at the very time of Brown's execution. He took refuge with his physician, Dr. David Thayer, and sent for his uncle, James Jackson, Mr. Wendell Phillips, and Mr. Sanborn to call and see him. They found him full of his new scheme, and very unwilling to obey their earnest injunctions to return at once to Canada. He finally consented to do so, and went to the Fitchburg Railroad station to take the night express train for Montreal. But, in his distracted state of mind, he took the wrong train and was left at Concord early in the evening, where he must pass the night. He had presence of mind enough to go to Sanborn's house, where he was sheltered and provided for; but his host, out of regard for the young man's safety, refused to see him, or to recognize him by any name but that of Lockwood, which he had assumed. He passed the night in Concord, and early in the morning was driven in a friend's carriage by Henry Thoreau to the neighboring railroad station of South Acton, where he

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

took the first train for Montreal, and safely arrived there. Mr. Thoreau only knew his companion as "Lockwood," and, though suspecting him to be one of the Harper's Ferry fugitives, was cautious not to inquire his true name of any person, until shortly before his own death in 1862, when the story was told him.

It is unnecessary to speak here of the events at Harper's Ferry, or the subsequent history of the affair. Our purpose has been simply to put on record a few facts which have come to our knowledge concerning the origin and progress of the plan of attack there made, and the relation which a few persons, living or dead, bore to John Brown and his great enterprise. We have shown it to be exclusively his own, carried out by him with the help of a few men and women whom his strong purpose and magnetic personality attracted to his assistance. It is not known that any of these friends regret or blush for the aid they were able to render to a hero as undaunted, as patient, and as completely under Divine guidance as any whom history or romance describes. Those who are dead did not; those who are still living need not. But if an imagined regard for the reputation of the living or the dead should tempt kinsmen or friends to forget or disown the share of any man in this mysterious affair, let them remember what Sir Kenelon Digby says of his father's connection with the Gunpowder plot of Guy Fawkes. "All men know," pleads the fair Stelliana in Sir Kenelon's Private Memoirs, "that it was no malitious intent or ambitious desires that brought Sir Everard Digby into that conspiracy, but his too inviolable faith to his friend that had trusted him with so dangerous a secret, and his zeal to his country's antient liberties."

COUNSEL.

COME, watch with me the dead, cold-carven face,
Fair-lidded and quite dumb,
All shadow-girded in a dim, still place;
Nay, follow me, and come.

Why pause? Her lips can say no suppliant word
Nor any bitter thing.
She lieth silently, poor wearied bird,
With wearied, folded wing.

Passionate sorrow or stern scorn alike
Were nothingness to her.
Though you should fondly kiss or cruelly strike,
She will not breathe or stir.

Death's hands, to her bowed spirit having been
Such rapture of release,
Are lifted o'er the memory of her sin,
And softly plead for peace.

Sanction their pleading with one sacred kiss,
And after, while you live,
Learn how all-perfect a revenge it is
Utterly to forgive!

Edgar Fawcett.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A COMEDY OF TERRORS.

XV.

Meeting and Parting.

GRIMES and Carrol, as we have seen, made it their sole occupation to saunter about the public places, for the simple reason that this was at once the best and most attractive thing that they could do; and as neither cared about company, each went by himself. On one of these occasions, Carrol set forth on his daily pilgrimage and wandered to the Champs Elysées.

There was almost always a great gathering of people here, but on this occasion the crowd was much larger than usual. A body of soldiers marched along, apparently on their way to the outside of the city, consisting of foot-soldiers and cavalry and artillery. From time to time the stirring strains of some martial air burst forth from a passing band, and the shouts and exclamations of the people arose without ceasing. It seemed to be the impression of the people that these troops were on their way to take part in a *sortie;* and the remarks that from time to time reached Carrol's ears gave that idea to him. He therefore found something of greater interest than usual in the sight of men who were actually on the way to attempt such a serious thing as actual battle with the beleaguering host; and so he wandered about from one place to another, seeking some position from which he could gaze upon the scene to the best advantage.

As he was thus moving about, he came upon the outskirts of a cluster of people, and hesitated for a moment about penetrating it. As he did so he noticed immediately in front of him a lady, the sight of whom sent a sudden thrill through every nerve. Her side face only was turned toward him, and she seemed trying to make her way through the crowd so as to go down the Champs Elysées; but the very first glance that he gave showed him that she was no other than Maud Heathcote herself. He stood motionless with surprise for a few moments, and then, as the lady turned towards the spot where he was standing, he shrank back and hastily concealed himself.

The crowd here made way for Maud, and she passed through, walking so close to Carrol that he could have touched her. But he contrived to conceal himself so effectually that she did not see him, and so she walked on without the slightest idea that he was so near. Carrol watched her closely, and then stole away after her. In order that he might not be observed, he got among some trees, and walked behind them, moving from one to the other in a very stealthy and, it must be confessed, a very absurd manner. It was not at all difficult to do this, for Maud walked very slowly, and at times stopped and looked back. Carrol could easily see by the expression of her face that she was looking for some one, but who that person could be he was at a loss to conjecture. Instantly his suspicious nature was aroused. Now, he thought, was the time to find out the mysterious motive that had kept her here in Paris; and though there was a miserable sense of shame in his mind, yet so great was his jealousy, that he kept up his watchful outlook for some considerable time.

At length Maud went on in a direction where the trees could no longer afford a cover to her jealous watcher. He was compelled, therefore, to venture forth, and this he did as cautiously as possible. There was a crowd in the distance, and toward this Maud walked, and into the midst of this she disappeared. Carrol now hastened in that direction very rapidly, fearing that he might lose her altogether. Maud had gone into the midst of the crowd,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but on reaching that place she found it impossible to go any farther. As her wish was to reach the other side, she found it necessary to retreat and go around the crowd, or attempt the passage farther on. She accordingly turned, and came back to the very place where she had entered. Now Carrol had just reached the edge of the crowd, and in his anxious desire to catch sight of Maud again he was looking most eagerly forward, when, suddenly, full before him, close in front, so close that further concealment of himself was impossible, with her eyes fixed on his, was Maud herself.

As she caught sight of Carrol a deep flush passed over her face, and then died out, leaving it as pale as death; her eyes fastened themselves on his with a look of wistful entreaty and unutterable sadness; and he could see that tears were trembling upon those long lashes. The sight of that face was piteous enough to have moved most deeply a sterner heart than that of Carrol. Her look flashed through him to his inmost soul, and at once all his hot rage, his venomous bitterness, his hard and cruel jealousy vanished and went into utter oblivion. He broke down completely. He reached out his hand and grasped hers feverishly. For a moment he could not speak, but at length he found his voice.

"Maud!"

"Paul!"

His voice was tremulous and hoarse; her voice was tremulous too and faint. They stood for an instant looking at one another with their hands clasped, forgetful of the crowd around them, and of everything except each other. Maud saw the change in Carrol's face; she marked how pale and wan he had become, the dark circles around his hollow eyes, the sharp, pinched features, the trembling and quivering muscles of the face. The sight of these, combined with her own deep agitation, affected her still more strongly, and at length she burst into tears and sobbed aloud.

Carrol stood there fearfully agitated. He was weak and nervous, for his long struggle with sorrow and passion had produced its natural effect, and had greatly undermined his strength and the steadiness of his nerves. The revulsion which he had just experienced, in passing in one instant from a fierce, headlong desire for vengeance, to the tenderest emotion of love and pity, bewildered his brain. The sight of Maud's sadness had wrought this change, and it was intensified by the sight of Maud's tears. There was a choking sensation in his throat; his heart throbbed wildly; his hand still clutched hers convulsively; and he neither moved nor spoke.

A movement now took place in the crowd, and the people pressed against the two as they stood there. This roused them. Maud gently withdrew her hand, and Carrol regained his presence of mind.

"It's too crowded," he said, in a low voice; "come away — with me — to some other place."

Maud said nothing, but as he started she walked by his side, and they went away out of the crowd.

"I — I lost my way," said Maud, at length, first breaking the silence. She spoke hurriedly and quickly. The silence embarrassed her so greatly, that to break it in any way was a relief; and so she naturally alluded to the first thing that came uppermost, which was her singular appearance thus alone in the midst of a crowd. "I lost my way," she repeated, "that is, I lost my sister, and I was trying to find her."

"Your sister?" said Carrol, in an absent voice.

"Yes. Georgie, — Mrs. Lovell; we went out together, you know," said Maud, who now seemed to have found her voice. "We generally drive out, but to-day she thought she would like a walk. We did n't know there would be such a crowd. We were walking about here together, when suddenly a great rush of people took place and we were separated. I 've been looking for her for nearly half an hour, but cannot

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

find her. Have you seen anything of her?"

She raised her eyes as she said this, and caught his gaze as it was fixed upon her. It was earnest and longing and sad, and full of a strange meaning. Her own eyes fell before it, and she was silent again.

"I have not seen her," said Carrol, in a dreamy, far-off tone.

They walked on a little farther in silence. Maud waited, thinking that Carrol would first break it, but Carrol made no attempt to speak. His brain was full of a tumult of thoughts, none of which he knew how to put into words. For this moment was sweet to *him beyond all expression, but beneath* the sweetness there was a dread memory which could not altogether leave him; and it was this that held his tongue fast bound, and checked the words that were rising to his lips.

Again Maud broke the silence which embarrassed her. But this time it was no commonplace that she uttered, but rather the thought that for weeks had been uppermost in her mind. It was a thing that she longed to know. Upon this all her future seemed to depend. So with a great effort she forced herself to speak.

"You never answered my last letter. Did you get it?"

She spoke almost breathlessly, with intense eagerness, not looking at him, but walking by his side with her eyes fixed upon the ground. Her voice was low, but the words were distinct, and every one was audible to her companion. To him those words were not altogether intelligible as to their meaning, but they had reference to her letter, to that letter which had wrought so much woe for him. In a moment a new change came over him, his dark memories rushed to the surface, overpowering the tenderness which had been born from this meeting.

"Your letter?" said he, in a harsh voice. "I answered it. Did n't you get my answer?"

His tone startled her and shocked her. She raised her eyes in terror; she saw a gloomy frown upon his face, and the gaze that he now turned upon her was cold and dark and cruel.

"Oh!" she said, with a low moan of irrepressible grief, "you cannot mean this. You don't know. Did you get my second letter, my letter in which I explained? Did you get that? I explained. It was an awful mistake — the first letter. You did not get my last letter."

Carrol started. He stopped and looked at her. A thought came to him which sent a dark look of anguish over his face.

"Last letter!" said he, "I don't know. I only got one letter, and I *answered it. I wrote you a — a* farewell. Did you write again? What do you mean by a mistake? Was there a mistake? What mistake? O heaven! tell me what you mean. I never got any other letter. What do you mean by your last letter?"

He spoke eagerly, but his tones expressed the deepest anguish. He was eager to know the truth, but beneath his eager desire was the grim consciousness that it was now too late for any explanation to avail. To find out that she after all was true, to have it all explained, was to him like having heaven opened; but at the same time the consciousness of his dark deed of horror formed an impenetrable barrier that lay between him and that heaven.

All this longing and all this fear showed itself in his face and in his voice; forming a strange mixture, which Maud noticed with wonder and deep apprehension. But for her there was nothing else to do than to exculpate herself, and show her innocence and her truth.

"Paul!" she cried, in a voice that was a wail of anguish, "how could you go without seeing me? How could you take that letter as if it came from me and never come to me, when one word would have explained all? It was all a mistake, — a miserable, miserable mistake. When you wrote to me you must have *known* how I would an-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

swer. And I *did* answer it as you knew I would. I answered it as you wished me to. But in my excitement and agitation I foolishly wrote on the envelope the wrong address. I did so because I happened to be writing a reply to some wretched creature, who sent me a silly note at the same time. In my agitation I wrote the wrong address on each envelope, and you got what was not intended for you. As soon as I received your reply I understood it all, and wrote you at once explaining it, but I never heard from you again. And, O Paul! believe me — I have — suffered — much."

Maud was a proud girl, and all this was a humiliation to her; but she had suffered so much, that she longed to find peace and reconciliation, and so she made this frank explanation. She made it frankly, because she was confident that it would make all things plain, and drive away the last feeling of suspicion and resentment that Carrol might entertain. She stood as she said this, not looking at him, but with her eyes fixed on the ground. A burning flush overspread her face. Her hands clutched one another convulsively. She spoke quickly, and the tones of her voice were tremulous and faint from the deep agitation of her heart. As she ended she could scarcely speak; her last words seemed wrung from her in spite of herself; and when she stopped she waited for a moment, expecting Carrol's answer, and then she slowly raised her eyes to his face. Her eyes were full of tears, and in them there was again that earnest, wistful look which had before been seen in them.

Carrol had heard every word. The few words of explanation had been sufficient to convey to his mind a general, yet a perfectly distinct idea of the nature of Maud's mistake, and to assure him that she had been perfectly true and faithful; that she had hastened to explain her mistake; that she had suffered greatly; and that his miserable jealousy had excited suspicions in his mind against her which were foully and frightfully unjust and disgraceful. He saw also that she had not only been thus perfectly true and faithful, but that now at this moment, and here by his side, she stood, herself volunteering this explanation, giving it unasked, and speaking to him words of sweet reconciliation. Thus all the truth burst upon him.

But as the truth thus became known to him, there were manifest to his mind other things which darkened that truth, and shrouded all his hopes in the blackness of darkness. She had explained her mistake fully and frankly, but she did not know how terrible, how fatal that mistake had been. As she stood there in her innocent trust, seeking reconciliation, her very words of explanation showed that she was utterly ignorant of the terrible crime which had been the result of this mistake. She evidently thought him as pure and as unstained as he had been when they had last spoken together. She could not have heard of the murder. She could not know what he was now. She thought that nothing lay between them but a misunderstanding that a word could remove; she did not know that between them there yawned an abyss which must separate them forever. Soon she must know all, and then she would understand; but now — but now —

A thousand thoughts like these rushed through Carrol's mind as he stood there. He did not venture to look at Maud. As she raised her tearful eyes timidly and wistfully to his face, this was what she saw. She saw Carrol standing with averted face, his brow drawn together in a dark and gloomy frown, his lips compressed, and his eyes staring far away into empty space. On that face there was not the faintest approach to anything like a relenting of that harsh and resentful temper which he had manifested ever since their misunderstanding; not the slightest sign of anything like an acquiescence in her explanation, of a readiness to receive it, or a tendency to meet her half-way and resume the old intimacy.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He stood there as harsh, as stern, as implacable as ever.

Maud's heart seemed to turn to stone as she gazed; and at once there arose within her a bitter sense of wrong and injury; her whole soul roused itself in strong resentment against such abominable treatment, and all the pride of her nature started up in fierce recoil proportionate to the degree in which she had just humiliated herself. She said not a word; she turned, and without another look walked quickly away.

Of Carrol she had now only one thought as she thus walked away from him, and that was the thought of a pride on his part so obstinate as to be utterly irremovable; a pride obdurate, implacable, and utterly devilish; a nature cold, selfish, and altogether devoid of human feeling; a foolish yet frantic self-esteem, which preferred continuance in a wrong course to a candid and frank change of opinion, even though such a course should lead to the shipwreck of a life, to the misery of himself and others. To her Carrol was obdurate beyond all hope of change. But it was not sorrow or melancholy that filled her heart as she left him. Her whole soul swelled with the most intense indignation against him for subjecting her so wantonly to such cruel injustice.

Meanwhile Carrol stood half frantic with the emotions that filled his heart and the thoughts that rushed through his brain. He did not see Maud leave him, nor did he hear her as she moved away; for his sight and hearing were dulled through the deep abstraction into which his feelings had plunged him. But at length he came to himself. He then saw, to his amazement, that he was alone. He could scarcely believe it. He looked all around. Crowds of people appeared assembled together not far away, — men, women, and children, — but where was Maud?

He looked all around, wildly, and full of consternation. Every word that she had spoken was still fresh in his memory. He knew that he had given no answer to her. He saw that she had left him in anger. But where had she gone? He could n't imagine; and so, after looking in all directions, he started off to search after her.

But Maud had already disappeared in the crowd, and was walking toward her lodgings. As for Carrol, he searched after her all that day, never ceasing to reproach and curse himself for his folly; but the day passed, and evening came, and Maud appeared no more.

XVI.

An Irresistible Appeal.

On the same eventful day on which Carrol met with Maud, Grimes also happened to be in the Champs Elysées. He had made his daily effort upon Trochu and the American Minister, but in each case the *queue* had again baffled him. Sauntering away, he had drifted up the Champs Elysées, and, as he had nothing better to do, on reaching the Arc de l'Étoile he turned and allowed himself to drift down again.

Though he had been subject to a fresh disappointment, he was not at all depressed in his mind, but his broad face exhibited an expression of serenity that showed a mind at peace within. There was something in the scene which was pleasant in his eyes. His thoughts were stimulated by the sight of the marching warriors. He saw the invincible legions of republican France going forth at last to victory. He longed to make one among them. Every beat of the drum, every blare of the bugle, every tramp of the measured footfall, seemed a summons for him to come and join these ranks.

He was so absorbed that he sauntered on quite oblivious of the scene around him, he was suddenly roused by an exclamation, and the sound of his own name uttered in a lady's voice. He started and stared.

"Why, Mr. Grimes! How very, very odd, but how really nice and fortunate!"

And Mrs. Lovell, for it was she who thus encountered him, held forth, with

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a beaming smile, her little hand, which Grimes at once grasped and crushed; while at the same instant, as though the touch of that hand was magical, every thought of Trochu, and the French Republic, vanished from his mind.

"Wal!" exclaimed Grimes. And upon saying that he relapsed into a silence which, under the circumstances, may perhaps have been more eloquent than words.

"It 's *so* absurd," said Mrs. Lovell, withdrawing her hand, not without some effort. "You know, I 've really lost my way; and poor Maudie! I 'm so dreadfully anxious about her. We were separated by a great crowd, and I 've been looking for her everywhere. I 'm really quite wild with anxiety, for I 'm sure she can never, never find her way home. And do you think that anything could happen to her, and is n't it a shame, Mr. Grimes?"

To this Grimes made no reply, but stood gazing at her with a smile of almost parental indulgence and fondness.

"You see, she does n't know her way about Paris at all; and have n't you seen her somewhere? I thought perhaps I might find her up this way."

Grimes shook his head, without attempting to say anything as yet.

"I 'm so dreadfully anxious, and I 'm so wretchedly tired," continued Mrs. Lovell. "I 've been looking for her everywhere; and I was just going to sit down and rest, when I met you. And don't you think, now, it would be just as well for me to sit down for a little while, Mr. Grimes? Might n't she find me more easily in that way, now? And could n't you find some seat for me, Mr. Grimes, where I could have a good view of the place, and see her if she came anywhere near?"

"Most certainly, ma'am," said Grimes, quickly. "I 'll be perfectly delighted, I assure you. I hain't the slightest doubt that that 's the best way to find her. Why, 't aint any use to hunt her up in this crowd, no more 'n a needle in a haystack."

"I was just beginning to think some such thing as that," said Mrs. Lovell.

Grimes now led the way out of the crowd to a seat on one side of the avenue, under the trees, in a place from which an extensive view could be commanded up and down. Here Mrs. Lovell seated herself with, "O thanks, very much; it 's really *so* good of you, Mr. Grimes"; while Grimes placed himself by her side.

"Wal," said he, after a pause, in a confidential and friendly tone, "and *how* are you to-day? Pooty well?"

"O, very well, thanks," said Mrs. Lovell, with a smile.

Grimes paused, and looked solemnly at the ground for a few moments.

"Fine weather we 're havin' to-day," said he at length.

"Is n't it perfectly exquisite?" said Mrs. Lovell.

"Fine place, Paris," continued Grimes, cheerily.

"Delightful," said Mrs. Lovell. "Do you know it 's my favorite place, that is, generally; of course, just now it 's a little different."

"Fine people the French," said Grimes.

"Yes; I always liked them very much; they are perfectly charming. And how very funny it was that I should meet you here. It 's really so nice, and so very, very providential, you know. Why, I was just beginning to despair."

Grimes heaved a heavy sigh, and meditated solemnly for a little while.

"Is this your first visit to Paris?" he asked at length, with an air of anxiety.

"O no," said Mrs. Lovell. "I was here once or twice before; and I liked it so very, very much, that I thought I should enjoy it now."

"I find, ma'am," said Grimes, "that you did n't get scared at the siege. You hung on, I see. 'T aint everybody that 'd do like that. That 's what I call pure spunk. And I tell you what it is, I did n't think you 'd 'a' done it. Most women are such cowards."

"O, but *I* 'm a coward, too," said

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mrs. Lovell. "I'm an awful coward. I'm frightened out of my wits. I did n't know there was going to be a siege, you know. There was no regular notice of it given. Nobody told me anything about it. I never was so surprised in my life. There ought to have been some regular public notice; now ought n't there, Mr. Grimes?"

"Wal," said Grimes, "that's queer. It strikes me there was a good deal about it in the papers."

"O yes; but then, you know, I never read the papers. One never can believe the half of what they say. They always contradict themselves the next day. And then they always say such extravagant things. Really, you know, if one went by what the papers say, one could never expect to have any peace at all."

"Wal," said Grimes, "I must say I do admire your style. I've often heard the papers pitched into; but people that abuse them always follow their lead, nevertheless. But you 're the very first person I ever met with that deliberately ignored them, and not only despised them, but acted up to it."

Mrs. Lovell took no notice of this, but looked earnestly at Grimes as he was speaking; and when he had ceased, she said, "I wonder why you remained, if you knew there was going to be a siege."

"Me?" said Grimes. "O, I 'm goin' to enlist in the French army."

"O, how lovely!" cried Mrs. Lovell, in an animated tone; "how nice, and chivalrous, and all that! Do you know I 've always perfectly adored the army? and to think of your being an officer! Only fancy! The idea!"

And Mrs. Lovell fastened her eyes upon space with an expression of wonder beyond words that was exceedingly becoming to her particular style of beauty.

"Yes, 'm," said Grimes seriously and with very creditable self-poise, "I quite agree with you there. It 's what you might consider a high and holy callin' just now in these times, when there is a regular epoch, a moment, ma'am, when liberty long buried is havin' a resurrection, and the eagle of France responds to the clarion voice of — of — the principles of — of — seventy-six, and the Republic arises great, glorious, and free. And so it's the proud privilege of every man that can wield a sword to strike a blow for the cause of freedom, — and so forth."

"How very, very true," said Mrs. Lovell; "and do you know, Mr. Grimes, I don't think I ever knew anything half so funny as the way you and I meet. Only fancy! First there was Niagara, then Montreal, then, you know, we met so absurdly on board the steamer, and now we have met again in the most unaccountable way in the middle of a besieged city. Really, it 's the most wonderful thing. But I suppose you don't think anything of meeting with poor me, now that you are a great French general, Mr. Grimes."

Grimes had already experienced a little of Mrs. Lovell's tendency to an abrupt transition from one subject of conversation to another, but this one bewildered him a little by its suddenness. The hint which she made as to his possible indifference was not, however unpleasant, and more than this it very naturally roused him to a manly denial of any such imputation.

"No, 'm," said he steadily, shaking his head at the same time with a very solemn emphasis. "That ain't my style. I don't forget so easy. When I get a thing I always cling to it. The circumstance that led to our acquaintance at Niagara, 'm, still remains with me here at Paris."

"The — the circumstance?" asked Mrs. Lovell, doubtfully.

"Yes, 'm."

"What a funny thing to call it a circumstance," said Mrs. Lovell, with a light laugh. "And have you really brought that absurd chignon here with you? Only fancy!"

"Wal," said Grimes, in a tone of candor, "when I said circumstance I meant incident, but as to the other — the apparatus — I 'm free to say I have it still — in my trunk — in this town."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"And did you really bring it all the way across the ocean?"

"Yes, 'm."

"How very funny!" sighed Mrs. Lovell; and then after a pause she added, in a low voice, "I don't see why, I 'm sure."

Grimes looked at her earnestly, a slight flush passed over his face, his lips parted to utter words which rested there; but he checked himself, and the words remained unspoken. Mrs. Lovell waited patiently, looking at the ground with a sweet air of meek expectation.

"Wal," said Grimes at last, "you see it was a kind of reminder of what I once wanted — and did n't get."

Mrs. Lovell gave a very little bit of a sigh.

"I 'm sure I don't see the use of being so awfully despondent," said she.

Grimes looked at her eagerly and earnestly. Mrs. Lovell looked at the ground. Grimes had a sudden idea that there might still be hope for him in this quarter, and the words were already on his lips which this idea impelled. But again he checked himself. It was his innate modesty and self-depreciation that stopped his utterance. No, he thought, she don't mean that; she is only speakin' of despondency in general, and she 's quite right. So Grimes said, "Wal, 'm, I 'm not that kind. I like one person, and no other. It ain't the most comfortable nature to have, but a fellow can't help his disposition. For my part, I 'm a man of one idea, — always was, am now, and ever shall be. I 'm a fellow of one feelin' too, I suppose, and so I find if I once get hankerin' after anybody, why, there I am, and I can't get over it. There ain't any use in it, as you say, course, but what can a fellow do if he can't help it?"

At this Mrs. Lovell again gave a little sigh.

"Yes," said she, "that 's just the way it is with me; and I think it 's awfully nice."

Grimes slowly took this observation into his mind and turned it over and over therein. It seemed to him at length to be a very gentle reminder, offered by Mrs. Lovell to him, that she was a widow, and was still brooding over her lost love, to which she still persisted in clinging with unchangeable constancy. He accepted it as a kind of rebuke, and in the simple honesty of his heart he found something in such rare constancy which was at once admirable, delicate, pure, holy, touching, affecting, pathetic, tender, and true. "It 's rather rough on me," thought honest Grimes, "but, after all, it comes up to my idea of a high-toned woman." He now felt afraid that he had gone too far in talking about his own feelings. He had perhaps offended her, and she had sought out this delicate way of administering a rebuke. He felt anxious to make amends for his error. He felt that an apology would only make matters worse; and so he sought rather to make an ample atonement by introducing some new subject which should at once be most agreeable to her, and at the same time be suggestive of his own penitence. To him there seemed to be only one subject which could fulfil these conditions, and that was the memory of the one to whom she had just professed, as he supposed, such undying constancy.

"I suppose now," said Grimes, with that heavy sigh, and that deep dolefulness of tone which are often employed by clergymen in condoling with the afflicted or the bereaved, — "I suppose now — that is, I dare say you thought a good deal of him."

Mrs. Lovell at this looked up a little puzzled. But she supposed that this was a remark put forth by Grimes to sound her as to her state of mind with reference to himself. So a slight blush passed over her face, and she sighed gently, "I suppose so."

"Liked to have him around?" continued Grimes in the same austerely dismal voice.

"Yes," sighed Mrs. Lovell.

"Missed him — most tremendously now?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mrs. Lovell shook her head slowly and emphatically, as though words were incapable of expressing the extent to which she had missed him.

"Die for him, course," wailed Grimes, as his voice grew dismaller and dolefuller.

"I suppose so," said Mrs. Lovell, after a pause in which she began to think that Grimes was making her commit herself altogether too much, but at the same time felt an undiminished desire to rouse him from his evident despondency to a healthier state of mind.

"Loss irreparable?" said Grimes, with a groan.

"Well — yes — that is," added Mrs. Lovell, "to lose him altogether, you know."

Grimes gave another groan. If anything had been needed to convince him of the utter futility of the hopes that he had once cherished it was this, — this touching confession of love stronger than death, — this declaration of a woman's truth and constancy. A new despair came to his own heart, but in the midst of his despair he honored her for such feelings. At length he roused himself and made a final effort.

"Fine man, — I s'pose, — this Mr. Lovell?"

That is what Grimes said. It was an outburst of frank generosity. He was boiling over with jealous hate of this Lovell, but in his tender regard for Mrs. Lovell he subdued his jealousy and his hate, subdued himself, and rose to a display of his better nature. "Fine man, — I s'pose, — this Mr. Lovell?"

At this Mrs. Lovell started as though she had been shot. She stared at Grimes in amazement, utterly unable to understand what he could possibly mean.

"Mr. — Lovell?" she faltered at length. "What do you mean? I don't understand you."

"Why," said Grimes in equal amazement, "we've been talkin' about him all along, have n't we? You said your loss of him was irreparable, and that you 'd die for him."

"I was n't talking about *him* at all," said Mrs. Lovell, rising to her feet. "And I 'm awfully anxious about poor Maudie. I have n't seen her yet at all. Have you, Mr. Grimes? And I 'm sure, I 've been looking all over that crowd ever since I sat down here. You have n't seen her, have you, Mr. Grimes? You did n't notice her, did you, Mr. Grimes?"

"No," said Grimes, who had risen to his feet in a dazed way, — "no, I — I have n't."

"I think I ought to go home. She will probably be there; I 'm so awfully anxious about her."

With these words Mrs. Lovell walked away, and Grimes walked away with her. He felt confused, bewildered, and confounded. The discovery that Mrs. Lovell had not been yearning over the dear departed had set his brain in a whirl. Who was the happy man for whom she felt such an attachment? He was too modest to think of himself after what had passed. Was there any other person? If so, who was he? Where did he live? Why should Mrs. Lovell be here in Paris? What did it all mean? All these thoughts served to throw him into such a state of confusion that he could scarcely find any words to say.

Out of this confusion, however, he was at length drawn by Mrs. Lovell herself. She at first had felt excessively vexed at the blunder that she had made, but her good-nature at length chased away her vexation; and besides, she had matters of importance about which she wished to speak. This was her present position in Paris, exposed to the insults of Du Potiron. She had defied him, and smiled at his threats; but in spite of all this she could not help feeling some uneasiness, and she was longing to have the interposition of some one whom she could trust. Now Grimes was the very man for this purpose and the only man.

So as they walked along she told Grimes exactly how it happened that

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

she was in Paris at this time. The admiration which he had felt for her courage was now exchanged for a more tender sentiment of pity for beauty in distress. The distress also was not trivial or ordinary. She explained to him the more peculiar difficulties of her situation, as well as those general ones which were natural to all who were shut up in the city. She did not mention Du Potiron, for she thought that the mention of his name would be of no service, and would only lead to long and troublesome explanations, involving Maud's private affairs. This she considered quite unnecessary. She confined herself simply to generalities. She expressed a great fear of internal difficulties in Paris, alluded in strong language to the chronic panic of Madame Guimarin, and the dangers of a revolution. The terror which she felt about the Reds seemed to Grimes to be very natural under the circumstances. In that danger he fully believed. Amid all his enthusiasm about the French Republic, he was well aware of the existence of a fanatical and bloodthirsty element in Paris, composed of people with whom the word "republic" meant little else than universal anarchy and bloodshed. Though he himself had no personal fears about the Red Republic, yet he knew that an unprotected lady had every reason for fear, and he was full of fear on her account.

And so it was that Mrs. Lovell's pathetic appeal elicited from Grimes a rejoinder so full of earnest sympathy and zealous devotion that she had nothing more to desire. She informed him plainly that her one and only wish was to escape from Paris. Inside the city she would never feel safe. Safety seemed to her to be outside. To this Grimes responded by a solemn promise that he would effect her escape in some way or other.

Grimes walked with Mrs. Lovell back to her lodgings, and left her there. When Mrs. Lovell reached her rooms she found Maud there already. If she had not been so much excited, she would have noticed that Maud was even paler than usual, and that she evinced a certain feverish agitation that presented a strong contrast to the dull depression which had characterized her manner for the last few weeks.

XVII.

A Desperate Project.

For the remainder of that day Grimes wandered about, his mind filled with novel yet by no means unpleasant thoughts. His meeting with Mrs. Lovell had produced a very strong effect upon his thoughts, giving them a tendency altogether different from what they had before, and driving away from his mind all ideas of a general nature. He no longer thought of the French Republic, or of the sublime resurrection of a dead and buried cause; he no longer exhausted his ingenuity in the endeavor to find some way in which he could assist the arms of struggling France; but, on the contrary, he saw before him something more tangible than an ideal republic. Instead of the symbolical figure of Liberty, he saw the real form and face of Mrs. Lovell asking with anxious look and audible words for his assistance.

She wanted his help. Yet what help could he give her? This was the problem that now occupied his thoughts. She wanted to escape from Paris, and how could he assist her to accomplish this? He knew very well that the place was "straitly shut up," and that no one could either enter or depart through that living wall which the enemy maintained around the beleaguered city. The notice of the approach of the enemy had been frequent and alarming, and the warning of the coming doom had been sufficient to drive away all who were in a position to leave. Almost all foreigners had long since left. A few had remained out of hardihood; but there were none except Mrs. Lovell who had remained on account of ignorance. The discovery of the real cause of her stay, though it put an end to the admiration which he had

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

felt for what he considered her "pluck," did not at all affect his desire to help her.

Yet how could he help her in her desire to escape? This was the problem that took up all his thoughts; and it proved to be a problem which was by no means easy of solution. In this state of mind he returned to his lodgings.

He found Carrol there, gloomy, meditative, and reticent. In such a mood Carrol did not seem to be at all fitted to become a confidant of the thoughts that were troubling the mind of Grimes, and so Grimes did not feel inclined to make any mention to him of the events of the day. To Grimes it seemed that the slightest allusion to the ladies would only madden his friend, and bring on the usual tirade against all women in general, and against Maud Heathcote in particular. If he had come to any conclusion, or made up his mind to any particular plan of action, he might possibly have sought the co-operation of Carrol; but as it was he was all at sea, and had not as yet settled upon anything. The consequence was that he simply held his tongue, and allowed himself to sink into his own meditations. On the other hand, Carrol's thoughts were certainly not of such a character as he would feel inclined to communicate to any friend, however intimate. He was on this occasion overwhelmed with self-reproach for his treatment of Maud. He had met with her, he had listened to her, and he had not only not replied, but he had allowed her to leave him without being conscious of her departure. The remembrance of this made him utterly miserable; and the misery which he felt was of such a nature that he could not hope for sympathy from others, since he could not even find excuse for himself.

Grimes meditated most earnestly over his problem for hours, until at last he fell asleep; and so intense were his meditations that they did not cease even then, but accompanied him. These dreams did not accomplish anything, however, beyond the simple fact that they served to keep his mind fixed all the more intently upon that one idea which had taken possession of it, and so much so that, on the following morn, it was just the same to him as though he had been wide awake all through the night.

On that day he made a final assault upon the American Minister. Fortunately for him there was a tremendous rain-storm. Now it happens that though the people on the continent of Europe can endure many evils, there is one thing that they cannot endure, and that is a thorough soaking. The terrors of rain have never been successfully encountered by any continental people. To the Anglo-Saxon race alone must the credit be given of a struggle with rain and victory over it. To them must be credited the umbrella, the mackintosh, the waterproof, and the india-rubber coat. These Anglo-Saxon inventions are still comparatively unknown to the benighted nations of the Continent, who still show a craven fear of rain, and, instead of boldly encountering it, shrink into the shelter of their houses at the slightest approach of a shower; and so it was that Grimes found the *queue* dwindled to nothingness, and at last a way opened for him to the ear of the American Minister.

The ambassador sent forth by the majority of the nations of the earth generally has nothing whatever to do; and his office is purely ornamental, being used as a brilliant reward for distinguished political merit. He is a luminary that reflects the lustre of his native country, and his only duty is to shine as bright as he can. The one exception to this is the American Ambassador. He has to do everything. He has to be guide, philosopher, and friend to the multitudinous American traveller. He has to supply him with passes to all manner of places, to shake hands with him, to listen to him, to warn, to rebuke, to instruct, to be instant in season and out of season. But of all the American Ambassadors that have ever lived, it may safely be said that not one

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has ever known the possibilities of American ambassadorial duty as it was known to the man who represented his country in Paris during the siege. For on that particular occasion the American eagle offered to gather the deserted chickens of all nations under her wings, and Minister Washburne it was who had to officiate as representative of the benevolent bird.

Grimes was able to make a statement of his case in the most effective manner. His errand now was totally different from what it would have been on a former occasion. Then he sought the Minister's aid for himself; now he sought it for the ladies. His former errand would also have been more successful, for then he merely wished to fight, but now his wish was to run away.

The Minister's answer at once chased away all the bright hopes in which Grimes had been indulging, and exhibited to him the utter desperation of his case. There was no such thing as escape possible to any one in the city, no matter what nation they might belong to. The Prussian rules were too stringent to be set aside for any human being whatever; nor was there any influence sufficiently potent to relax the rigor of those rules.

Of course, after such information as this, Grimes had nothing whatever to say. It was clearly a case in which there was no opportunity to make use of any argument or any persuasion. Paris was as entirely isolated from the world as though it had been an island in the midst of the ocean, unvisited by ships and unknown to man.

This is about what the Minister remarked to Grimes, and at the same time he alluded to the fact that the only communication with the world outside had been contrived by the ingenuity of the Parisians; and those who were sufficiently desperate might now try the air and fly away in a balloon.

The suggestion was made in a general way, but the mention of balloons sank deep into the mind of Grimes and attracted all his thoughts at once. He carried this thought with him away from the embassy, and as he walked away through the crowded streets he lost himself in speculations as to the feasibility of such a plan.

A balloon!

Flight in a balloon!

At first the idea was certainly startling, in fact quite preposterous. But a second thought made it much less so, and a third and a fourth made it seem rather promising.

A balloon? Why not? It was certainly an easy mode of travelling. No jolts, no plungings and rollings; no alternations of rapidity and slowness, but all calm, smooth, yea, even luxurious.

And the management. Simple? Why, no mode of travelling could possibly equal it in this respect. All one had to do was to pull the valve-rope to bring the balloon down to the earth, and throw out ballast to raise it to the skies.

As to undertaking the management of the untried machine, Grimes had no doubts whatever about his capacity. For that matter he felt himself fully equal to any undertaking, however strange or unfamiliar. He felt within his soul a consciousness that he could manage a balloon, just as he felt the same consciousness that he could edit a paper, or preach a sermon, or command an army. "Yes," said Grimes proudly to himself. "Put me in a balloon, and I 'll run it with any professional in all the blue ethereal sky."

In fact the more he thought of this the more fascinating did the idea become, and at length it seemed to him not only a practicable mode of escape from Paris, but the easiest, safest, pleasantest, and most delightful mode of travelling that was ever devised. There was only one objection that could possibly be urged even by the most timid, and that was the notorious fact that the balloon could not be guided, but was at the mercy of the wind. But to Grimes this did not seem any disadvantage whatever. It might be taken, he thought, as an objection

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

against balloons as a universal mode of travelling where the traveller wished to reach some definite place; but to him, where his only desire was to escape from this one point, and where destination was a matter of indifference, this formed no objection whatever. Not the slightest difference could it make to him where the wind might carry him, whether east, west, north, or south. One thing, of course, he saw to be desirable, and that was not to start in a gale of wind. "In any ordinary blow," he thought, "I 'm at home, and I 'm ready to soar aloft to the everlasting stars."

Over such thoughts as these he finally grew greatly excited, and determined at once to make inquiries about balloons. Already they had become an article of necessity to the Parisian world, and at regular intervals they were sent forth bearing messages or passengers to the world without. Already Gambetta had made his flight, and dropped from the skies in the midst of astonished France to take up the *rôle* of heaven-descended monster.

What Gambetta has done, Grimes can do.

Such was the general conclusion which summed up the workings of the Grimesian brain. He had no difficulty in finding out the locality of the Balloon Depot, and in course of time he reached the place and stood in the presence of Monsieur Nadar.

The establishment was an extensive one. The exigencies of the siege had created a demand for balloons as the one great necessity of Paris, and every aeronaut had flung himself into the business. Prominent among these were Messieurs Nadar and Godard, both of whom were eminent in this celestial profession. Although the radical deficiencies of the balloon as a means of travel can never be remedied, yet much had been done by these gentlemen to make the balloon itself as efficient as it is possible for a mere balloon to be. A new material had been invented, consisting of cotton cloth saturated in india-rubber solution, which formed a substance that was quite airtight and at the same time far cheaper than the silk which had formerly been used, as well as stronger. Thus a better balloon was now made at a very much lower price than formerly. Other improvements had also been made in the netting, in the valve-rope and valve, and in the material used for ballast. Its structure was now simple enough to be understood by a child.

M. Nadar informed Grimes that the weather had been unsuitable for some days past, and that none had left the city, but he hoped after this rain there would be one or two quiet days. He had several balloons ready, which he could prepare on short notice. Grimes asked him his opinion as to the possibility of his managing a balloon himself; not that he doubted it himself, but he was naturally desirous to see what another person might think. To his great delight, Nadar informed him that the mere management of a balloon was very simple, the chief requisite being presence of mind and cool courage.

None of the balloons which were ready could carry as many as four, nor did Grimes feel particularly anxious to take the whole party. He felt confident that he could manage the balloon if he had only one other passenger, — Mrs. Lovell, for instance. As to Miss Heathcote, he felt that it would be safer for her, as well as pleasanter for him, if she went in another balloon. He thought that Carrol might go with her. At the same time he did not think that Carrol would be capable of managing a balloon himself; and so he proposed to engage an aeronaut to navigate the other one. Thus everything, as he thought, would be fair and respectable, and safe and pleasant, and they could arrange a common rendezvous, where they could all meet again in a general reunion, and congratulate one another over their escape.

It was a plan which seemed to him to be so pleasant in every respect and from every point of view, that his whole

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

soul was now set upon carrying it into execution. His last interview with Mrs. Lovell had produced a very strong and very peculiar effect upon him. Her allusions about constancy were not made with reference to her first husband, and he was too modest to venture to appropriate them to himself; but still, though they were not altogether intelligible, they were suggestive of very pleasant possibilities.

There were two difficulties, however, in the way of his plan, which might prevent its accomplishment. The first was, the possible unwillingness of Mrs. Lovell to make such a journey. The other was, the possible refusal of Carrol to have anything to do with Maud. Each of these difficulties would have to be encountered. As to the first, he trusted very much to his own powers of persuasion. He felt that Mrs. Lovell's prejudices against ballooning were merely idle fears which could be readily dissipated, if he only should explain to her how simple, pleasant, safe, agreeable, and delightful that mode of travelling was, and if he could only induce her to put implicit confidence in him. As to Carrol, he hoped to be able to persuade him also; but as yet he did not bestow much thought upon him. The great difficulty he rightly felt would be to persuade Mrs. Lovell. Strangely enough, in all this he never thought of any difficulty on the part of Maud. This arose from the fact that he was so in the habit of identifying her with her sister, that if Mrs. Lovell should only consent to go, it seemed to him to follow, as a matter of course, that Maud would go with her.

James DeMille.

HOW LONG?

IF on my grave the summer grass were growing,
Or heedless winter winds across it blowing,
Through joyous June, or desolate December,
How long, sweetheart, how long would you remember,—
How long, dear love, how long?

For brightest eyes would open to the summer,
And sweetest smiles would greet the sweet new-comer,
And on young lips grow kisses for the taking,
When all the summer buds to bloom are breaking,—
How long, dear love, how long?

To the dim land where sad-eyed ghosts walk only,
Where lips are cold, and waiting hearts are lonely,
I would not call you from your youth's warm blisses,
Fill up your glass and crown it with new kisses,—
How long, dear love, how long?

Too gay, in June, you might be to regret me,
And living lips might woo you to forget me;
But ah, sweetheart, I think you would remember
When winds were weary in your life's December,—
So long, dear love, so long.

Louise Chandler Moulton.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DIVERSIONS OF THE ECHO CLUB.

NIGHT THE SEVENTH.

THIS night the Gannet led the way to the more earnest conversation, by returning to a point touched by the Ancient at their fifth meeting. He said, "I should like to know wherein the period of fermentation, which precedes the appearance of an important era in literature, and the period of subsidence, or decadence, which follows it, differ from each other."

ZOÏLUS. H'm! that 's rather a tough problem to be solved at a moment's warning. I should guess that the difference is something like that between the first and second childhood of an individual. In the first case, the faults are natural, heedless, graceful, and always suggestive of something to be developed; in the latter, they are helpless repetitions, which point only towards the past.

GALAHAD. Are you not taking the correspondence for granted? Is it exactly justified by the history of any great era in literature?

THE ANCIENT. Not entirely. But there is surely an irregular groping for new modes of thought and new forms of expression, in advance; and a struggle, after the masters of the age have gone, to keep up their pitch of achievement.

THE GANNET. Very well; you are near enough in accord to consider my next question. In which period are we living at present? The Ancient says that we have had the heroes and the *epigonoi*, and that there will be many fallow years: I, on the contrary, feel very sure that we are approaching another great era; and the confusion of which he spoke the other night is an additional proof of it.

THE ANCIENT. If you remember, I disclaimed any power of prediction.

THE GANNET. So you did; but I insist that the reasons you gave are just as powerful against your conclusions, unless you can show us that the phenomena of our day are those which *invariably* characterize a period of decadence. I have been reflecting upon the subject with more earnestness than is usual to me. In our modern literature I do *not* find echoes of any other than the masters who are still living and producing, especially Browning, Longfellow, and Tennyson; the faint reflections of Poe seem to have ceased; and the chief characteristic of this day, so far as the younger authors are concerned, is a straining after novel effects, new costumes for old thoughts, if you please, but certainly something very different from a mere repetition of forms of style which already exist. That there is confusion, an absence of pure, clearly outlined ideals of art, I am willing to admit. I accept the premises, but challenge the inferences.

GALAHAD. I am only too ready to agree with you.

THE ANCIENT. What I wish is, that we should try to comprehend the literary aspects of our time. If we can turn our modern habit of introversion away from our individual selves, and give it more of an objective character (though this sounds rather paradoxical), it will be a gain in every way. A period of decadence is not necessarily characterized by repetition; it may manifest itself in exactly such straining for effect as the Gannet admits. Poe, for instance, or Heine, or Browning, makes a new manner successful; what more natural, then, than that an inferior poet should say to himself, "The manner is everything; I will invent one for myself!" I find something too much of this prevalent, and it does not inspire me with hope.

ZOÏLUS. But the costume of the thought, as of the man, is really more important than the body it hides. And I insist that manner is more than sym-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

metry, or even strength, as the French have been shrewd enough to discover. We are moving towards an equal brilliancy of style, only most of us are zigzagging on all sides of the true path. But we shall find it, and then, look out for a shining age of literature!

THE GANNET (*to the* ANCIENT). You were speaking of the introversion which is such a characteristic of modern thought. Can a writer avoid it, without showing, in the very effort, that he possesses it?

THE ANCIENT. I doubt it. Goethe tried the experiment, and did not fairly succeed. It seems to me that the character of an author is relative to the highest culture of his generation. I have never found that there was much development without self-study; for the true artist must know the exact measure of his qualities, in order to use them in his one true way. This is a law as applicable to Shakespeare as to you; but he may choose to conceal the process, and you may choose to betray it. For a poet to speculate upon his own nature, in his poems, is a modern fashion, which originated with Wordsworth. To us it seems an over-consciousness; yet it may seem the height of naïve candor, and therefore a delightful characteristic, to the critics of two centuries hence.

ZOÏLUS. Well, upon my word, Ancient, you are the most bewildering of guides! You talk of eternal laws, you refer to positive systems, but when we come to apply them, there is nothing permanent, nothing settled, only a labyrinth of perhapses and may-seems. What are we to do?

THE GANNET (*offering the hat*). To draw your name, and write.

ZOÏLUS (*drawing*). Julia Ward Howe: and I feel no mission within me! I shall miserably fail.

THE GANNET. Jean Ingelow: I need no mission.

GALAHAD. The saints help me! Walt Whitman.

THE ANCIENT. Buchanan Read: *I* must call on the Pope, to judge from the last poem of his which I have read. There are but one or two more slips in the hat: whom have we? Piatt, Bret Harte, Joaquin Miller! Galahad, I suggest that you return our yawping cosmos, and take Piatt in his stead; then let us add John Hay, and we shall have all the latest names together for our next and final night of diversions.

THE GANNET. I second your proposal. It will separate the last and most curious phenomena in poetry from those which preceded them. Perhaps we may be able to guess what they portend.

GALAHAD (*changing the name*). I am so grateful for the permission, that I will write two; adding to the imitation of Piatt that of the author of "A Woman's Poems," in whose poetical fortunes, I imagine, he feels more interest than even in his own. I am attracted by her poems as the Gannet is attracted by Mrs. Stoddard's, though the two are wholly unlike. In "The Woman" I also see indications of a struggle between thought and language, a reluctance to catch the flying Psyche by the wings, and hold her until every wavering outline is clear. Women-poets generally stand in too much awe of their own conceptions.

ZOÏLUS (*solemnly*). I am possessed! *Procul, O procul,* — or at least be silent. (*Writes.*)

(*All write steadily, and finish their tasks nearly at the same time.*)

THE CHORUS. You came up so nearly neck and neck, that only we who timed you can decide. The Gannet first.

THE GANNET. Then hearken to Jean Ingelow. (*Reads.*)

THE SHRIMP-GATHERERS.

Scarlet spaces of sand and ocean,
Gulls that circle and winds that blow;
Baskets and boats and men in motion,
Sailing and scattering to and fro.

Girls are waiting, their wimples adorning
With crimson sprinkles the broad gray flood;
And down the beach the blush of the morning
Shines reflected from moisture and mud.

Broad from the yard the sail hangs limpy;
Lightly the steersman whistles a lay;
Pull with a will, for the nets are shrimpy,
Pull with a whistle, our hearts are gay!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tuppence a quart; there are more than fifty!
Coffee is certain, and beer galore:
Coats are corduroy, minds are thrifty,
Won't we go it on sea and shore!

See, behind, how the hills are freckled
With low white huts, where the lasses bide!
See, before, how the sea is speckled
With sloops and schooners that wait the tide!

Yarmouth fishers may rail and roister,
Tyne-side boys may shout, "Give way!"
Let them dredge for the lobster and oyster,
Pink and sweet are our shrimps to-day!

Shrimps and the delicate periwinkle,
Such are the sea-fruits lasses love:
Ho! to your nets till the blue stars twinkle,
And the shutterless cottages gleam above!

THE CHORUS. A very courteous echo. The Ancient was next.

THE ANCIENT. I think if Buchanan Read had confined himself to those short, sweet, graceful lyrics by which he first became known, he would have attained a better success. It is singular, by the by, that his art does not color his poetry, as in Rossetti's case; no one could guess that he is also a painter. But I remember that Washington Allston is a similar instance. Read's best poems are those which have a pastoral character, and I have turned to them for his characteristic manner. (*Reads.*)

A SYLVAN SCENE.

The moon, a reaper of the ripened stars,
Held out her silver sickle in the west;
I leaned against the shadowy pasture-bars,
A hermit, with a burden in my breast.

The lilies leaned beside me as I stood;
The lilied heifers gleamed beneath the shed:
And spirits from the high ancestral wood
Cast their articulate benisons on my head.

The twilight oriole sang her valentine
From pendulous nests above the stable-sill,
And like a beggar, asking alms and wine,
Came the importunate murmur of the mill.

Love threw his flying shuttle through my woof,
And made the web a pattern I abhorred;
Wherefore alone I sang, and far aloof,
My melting melodies, mightier than the sword.

The white-sleeved mowers, coming slowly home,
With scythes like rainbows on their shoulders hung,
Sniffed not, in passing me, the scent of Rome,
Nor heard the music trickling from my tongue.

The milkmaid, following, delayed her step,
Still singing as she left the stable-yard:
'T was "Sheridan's Ride" she sang: I turned and wep',
For woman's homage soothes the suffering bard!

GALAHAD. Why did n't you take Read's "Drifting"?

THE ANCIENT. It is a beautiful poem, but would betray itself in any imitation. My object was to catch his especial poetic dialect.

THE CHORUS. Now, Zoïlus.

ZOÏLUS. I have followed exactly the Ancient's plan, but with the disadvantage of not having read Mrs. Howe's "Passion Flowers" lately; so I was forced to take whatever features were accessible, from her prose as well as verse. (*Reads.*)

THE COMING RACE.

When with crisped fingers I have tried to part
The petals which compose
The azure flower of high æsthetic art,
More firmly did they close.

Yet woman is not undeveloped man, —
So singeth Tennyson:
Desire, that ever Duty's feet outran,
Begins, but sees not done.

Our life is full of passionate dismay
At larger schemes grown small;
That which thou doest, do this very day,
Then art thou known of all.

The thing that was ungerms the thing to be;
Before reflects Behind:
So blends our moral trigonometry
With spheroids of the mind.

Time shall transfigure many a paradox,
Now crushed with hoofs of scorn,
When in the beauty of the hollyhocks
The Coming Man is born.

His hand the new Evangels then shall hold,
That make earth epicene,
And on his shoulder, coiffed with chrismal gold,
The Coming Woman lean!

THE GANNET. O, she should not lean on his shoulder! That is a dependent attitude.

ZOÏLUS. I know; but there is the exigency of an immediate rhyme, and "epicene" is a word which I could not sacrifice.

THE ANCIENT. You have hit upon one of the vices of our literary class, — the superficial refinement which vents itself on words and phrases. I have seen expressions of both love and grief which were too elegant for passion. The strong thought always finds the best speech, but as its total form: it does not pause to prink itself by the way, or to study its face in a glass. I

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

beg pardon, Zoïlus; I am not speaking of, but *from*, you.

ZOÏLUS. As the sinner furnishes more texts than the saint.

THE CHORUS. Let us not keep Galahad waiting.

GALAHAD. I promised two, but have only finished the first. The Gannet must keep me company; for we were nigh forgetting William Winter, and he must be entertained before our board is cleared for the last comers. I dare say we shall remember others; indeed, I can think of several who ought to please the Ancient, for they simply give us their ideas without any manner at all.

THE ANCIENT. Sarcasm from Galahad is sarcasm indeed! I am assailed on all sides, to-night. But let us have Piatt; we have all looked through his "Western Windows."

GALAHAD. (*Reads.*)

THE OLD FENCE-RAIL.

It lies and rots by the roadside,
Among the withering weeds;
The blackberry-vines run o'er it,
And the thistles drop their seeds.

Below, the Miami murmurs;
He flows as he always flowed;
And the people, eastward and westward,
Travel the National Road.

At times a maiden's glances
Gild it with tints of dawn,
But the school-boy snorts with his nostrils,
Kicks it, and hastens on.

Above it the pioneer's chimney,
Lonely and rickety, leans;
Beside it the pioneer's garden
Is a wildering growth of greens.

It was split by the stalwart settler,
One of the ancient race,
And the hands of his tow-haired children
Lifted it into its place.

Years after the gawky lover
Sat on it, dangling his heels,
While his girl forgot her milking,
And the pen, with its hungry squeals.

Ah, the rail has its own romances,
The scenes and changes of years;
I pause whenever I see it,
And drop on it several tears.

ZOÏLUS. Don't you all feel, with me, that our imitations become more and more difficult as we take the younger authors who give us sentiment, fancy, pure metres, — in short, very agreeable and meritorious work, — but who neither conquer us by their daring nor provoke us by offending our tastes?

THE ANCIENT. We foresaw this, the first evening, you will remember. There are many excellent poets, who cannot be amusingly travestied, — Collins, or Goldsmith, for example. I was just deliberating whether to suggest the names of two women who have written very good poems, Lucy Larcom and she who calls herself "H. H." The former has rhetoric and rhythm, and uses both quite independently; her "Hannah Binding Shoes" struck an original vein, which I wish she had gone on quarrying. But her finest poem, "The Rose Enthroned," could only be appreciated by about one per cent of her readers. "H. H." shows delicacy and purity of sentiment, yet her verse is not precisely *song*. Her ear fails to catch the rarer music which lurks behind metrical correctness. I don't well see how either could be imitated; so we will leave the Gannet and Galahad to their second task.

THE GANNET (*looking up*). What you have been saying also applies to my present model. Just the best poems in his "Witness" are so simple, so sweetly and smoothly finished, so marked by pure taste and delicate fancy, that a good travesty would have the air of a serious imitation.

ZOÏLUS (*to the* ANCIENT). However we may disagree, I heartily join you in relishing a marked individuality in poetry.

THE ANCIENT. When it is honest, when it frankly expresses the individual nature, not too much restricted by the conventionalisms of the day, nor yielding too indolently to the influences of other minds. It is a notable characteristic of nearly all our younger poets, that they wander, as if at random, over such a wide field, before selecting their separate paths. One cause of this, I should guess, is the seduction exercised by that refinement in form, that richness and variety of metrical effect, which marks our

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

modern poetry. Twenty years ago, our only criticism almost ignored the idea in a poem; it concerned itself with words, lines, or stanzas, italicizing every agreeable little touch of fancy, as a guide to the reader. Leigh Hunt made this fashion popular; Poe imitated him; and our young authors were taught to believe in detached beauties of expression, instead of pure and symmetrical conceptions. Take the earlier poems of Stoddard, Read, Aldrich, Bayard Taylor, and others, and you cannot fail to see how they were led astray.

ZOÏLUS. Then, I suppose, their genuine poetical quality is tested by the extent to which they have emancipated themselves from those early influences, and discovered their proper individualities?

THE ANCIENT. Most certainly; and if you had grown up with the generation, as I have (being very little older), you would see, as I do now, how each is struggling out of the general wilderness. Boker had not far to go; he grew up under the broad wings of the old English dramatists. Stoddard first struck his highest performance in "The Fisher and Charon," and Stedman in his "Alectryon," though both are still best known by their lighter lyrics. Aldrich seems now to be aware of his native grace and delicacy of fancy, and Howells of the sportive, lightsome element, which the *Weltschmerz* of youth for a time suppressed. In his "Pastorals," Bayard Taylor seems inclined to seek for the substance of poetry, rather than the flash and glitter of its rhetorical drapery. Piatt is turning more and more to that which lies nearest him: in short, without pretending to decide how far each is successful, I think that each, now, is attending seriously to his own special work.

ZOÏLUS. How much longer do you give them, to reach their highest planes of performance?

THE ANCIENT. All their lives; and I refer you to Bryant, Emerson, Longfellow, and Whittier, as instances of continuous development. If our American atmosphere, as you said the other night, retards the growth of literary men, you cannot deny that it wonderfully prolongs the period of their growth.

THE GANNET. Here have Galahad and myself been waiting with our manuscripts, knowing that you two can never agree, but hoping that each might exhaust the other.

ZOÏLUS. This from you, for whom there is neither time, space, nor place, when you get fairly started! But who are you now?

THE GANNET. William Winter, at your service. (*Reads.*)

LOVE'S DIET.

There be who crave the flavors rich
  Of boneless turkey and of beef;
There be who seek the relish which
  To palsied palates brings relief:
But I, in love's most patient hush,
Partake with thee of simple mush.

The pheasant seems so bright of wing,
  Because 't is wedded with expense;
The rarer Strasburg pasties bring
  But fleet enjoyment to the sense;
Yet common things, that seem too nigh,
Both purse and heart may satisfy.

'T is sweet to browse on dishes rare,
  When those who give them can afford:
Sweeter this unpretending fare,
  When thou art seated at the board,
With spoonly fingers to unfold
The yielding mush's mass of gold.

Thou pour'st the milk that whiter seems
  Than is the orbit of thy brow,
And I indulge with lamb-like dreams,
  And many a white and harmless vow;
I only wish that there could be
One bowl, not two, for thee and me.

ZOÏLUS. I was not expecting even that much success.

THE GANNET. Galahad was generous, to give me the lighter task. It would have quite bewildered me to imitate "A Woman's Poems," because their chief characteristic is a psychological one. If we had taken that wonderful volume of the songstresses of the "South-Land," now —

ZOÏLUS. That reminds me of a graceful Southern singer, who is like a bird alone in the desert, — Paul H. Hayne. Talk of *our* lack of sympathy and encouragement, here, in New York! What mate has he, for hundreds of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

miles around him? Why, there is not even the challenge of a rival lance; he must ride around the lonely lists, with neither antagonist to prove his mettle, nor queen to crown him for success.

THE ANCIENT. An author *must* have an audience, however thin. We are told that Poetry is its own exceeding great reward: very well: but what if you sing your song into the air and never find it again in the heart of a friend? Genius without sympathetic recognition is like a kindled fire without flue or draught; it smoulders miserably away instead of leaping, sparkling, and giving cheer. I have seen some parts of the country where a man of sensitive, poetical nature would surely die, if he could not escape. We ought to be very tender towards all honest efforts in literature.

GALAHAD. The "Woman" whom I have imitated needs only the encounter of kind, yet positive minds, to give her dreams what they still lack, — a distinct reality. I have purposely tried to exaggerate her principal fault, for it was the only thing I could do. (*Reads.*)

THE PLASTER CAST.

The white thought sleeps in it enshrined,
  Though mean and cheap the substance seems,
As sleep conceptions in the mind,
  Hardened, and unreleased by dreams.

A parrot only! yet the child
  Stares with untutored, dim surprise,
And fain would know what secret mild
  Is ambushed in those moveless eyes.

His cherry from the painted beak
  Falls, when his gentle hand would give,
So early some return we seek
  From that which only seems to live.

Ah, let us even these symbols guard,
  Nor shatter them with curious touch;
For, should we break ideals hard,
  The fragments would not move us much.

ZOÏLUS. You have fairly bewildered me, Galahad. I thought there was an actual idea in the verses, but it slips from my hand like an eel.

THE ANCIENT. It would better answer for the travesty of a school which has a limited popularity at present, but to which "A Woman" does not belong.

GALAHAD. What school? I know of none such.

THE ANCIENT. The most active members would no doubt be much astonished if I were to tell them of it; but it is a kind of school, nevertheless. I think it must have originated as long ago as the days of *The Dial*, and has not yet wholly gone out of fashion with a rather large class of readers. You will find plenty of specimens in newspapers of a mixed religious and literary character, and now and then in the magazines.

THE CHORUS. Give us its peculiarities.

THE ANCIENT. First, great gravity, if not solemnity of tone; a rhythm, sometimes weak, sometimes hard, but usually halting; obscurity and incoherence of thought, and a perpetual reference to abstract morality.

ZOÏLUS. Don't describe, but imitate.

THE ANCIENT. I could give you a stanza, by way of illustration. Furnish me with a subject, — anything you please. (ZOÏLUS *writes.*) *The Fifth Wheel!* that will answer; for the poets of this school always begin far away from their themes. The first stanza might run thus: —

From sunshine and from moral truth
  Let Life be woven athwart thy breast!
The rapid cycles of thy youth
  But fetter Duty's solemn quest.

OMNES. Go on!

THE ANCIENT. Now I may get a little nearer to the subject, though I don't clearly see how. (*After a pause.*)

Vibration gives but faint assent
  To that which in thee seems complete,
But time evolves the Incident
  Behind the dust-driven chariot's feet.

Be well provided! Overplus
  Is Life's stern law, none can evade;
Thou to the goal shalt hasten thus,
  When selfish natures' wheels are stayed.

ZOÏLUS. Great Jove! to think that I never discovered the undying Laura Matilda in this prim disguise! It is the languishing creature grown older, with a high-necked dress, a linen collar, and all her curls brushed smooth! Ancient, you have purged mine eyes

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from visual film; this boon wipes out all remembrance of our strife.

OMNES. Enough for to-night!

[*Exeunt.*

NIGHT THE EIGHTH.

(*All the members promptly on hand.*)

THE CHORUS. How much does any author distinctly know of himself, or the quality of his works?

ZOÏLUS. Not much.

GALAHAD. Everything!

THE GANNET. Only what makes a hit, and what does n't.

THE ANCIENT. It depends on who and what the author is: you will find both extremes represented.

THE CHORUS. Yourselves, for instance!

ZOÏLUS. To be frank, I think I have more merit than luck. But when I come to contrast the degrees of popularity with the character of the performance, I am puzzled.

GALAHAD. Popularity has nothing to do with it. I know that some of my qualities are genuine, while other necessary ones are weakly represented. Our talk, the last night, satisfied me that I have not yet found the one best direction; but, on the other hand, one dare not force one's own development, and I think I see whither I am tending.

THE GANNET. Do you want to see where you stand, now, or very nearly the spot?

GALAHAD. Show me if you can?

(*The Gannet takes a sheet of paper and writes.*)

ZOÏLUS (*to the* ANCIENT). Do you think that a poet is generally a correct judge of his own works?

THE ANCIENT. Please, don't repeat that dismal platitude! A genuine poet is *always* the best judge of his own works, simply because he has an ideal standard by which he measures whatever he does. He may not be able to guess what will be most popular; he may attach an exorbitant value to that which is born of some occult individual mood, in which few others can ever share; but in regard to the quality of the calm, ripened product of his brain he cannot be mistaken! To admit that he can be, substitutes chance for law in the poetic art, and brings us down to the vulgar idea of a wayward and accidental inspiration, instead of conscious growth followed by conscious achievement.

ZOÏLUS. You astonish me.

THE ANCIENT. Then be glad; it is a sign that you are not poetically *blasé*.

GALAHAD. Never! One can never be that.

THE GANNET. Wait till you hear how your theorbo sounds in my ears. What I have attempted is a serious, not a comical, echo of your style.

OMNES. Give it to us!

THE GANNET. Keep Galahad's hands off me till I have finished! (*Reads.*)

THE TWO LIVES.

Down in the dell I wandered,
  The loneliest of our dells,
Where grow the lowland lilies,
  Dropping their foam-white bells,
And the brook among the grasses
  Toys with its sand and shells.

Fair were the meads and thickets,
  And sumptuous grew the trees,
And the folding hills of harvest
  Were lulled with the fanning breeze,
But I heard, beyond the valley,
  The roar of the plunging seas.

The birds and the vernal grasses,
  They wooed me sweetly and long,
But the magic of ocean called me,
  Murmuring vast and strong;
Here was the flute-like cadence,
  There was the world-wide song!

"Lie in the wood's embraces,
  Sleep in the dell's repose!"
"Float on the limitless azure,
  Flecked with its foamy snows!"
Such were the changing voices,
  Heard at the twilight's close.

Free with the winds and waters,
  Nestled in shade and dew:
Bliss in the soft green shelter,
  Fame on the boundless blue;
Which shall I yield forever?
  Which forever pursue?

OMNES (*clapping their hands*). Galahad! Galahad!

GALAHAD (*with a melancholy air*). It is worse than the most savage criti-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cism. There is just enough of my own sentiment and poetical manner in it, to show me how monstrously blind I have been in not perceiving that scores of clever fellows may write the same things, if they should choose. I ought to relapse into the corner of a country newspaper.

THE ANCIENT. Take heart, my dear boy! We all begin with sentiment and melodious rhythm,— or what seems to us to be such. We all discover the same old metaphors over again, and they are as new to us as if they had never been used before. Very few young poets have the slightest presentiment of their coming development. They have the keenest delight, the profoundest satisfaction, with their crudest works. With knowledge comes the sense of imperfection, which increases as they rise in performance. Remember that the Gannet is five or six years older than you, and can now write in cold blood what only comes from the summer heat of your mind.

GALAHAD. I understand you, and don't mean to be discouraged. But Zoïlus is fully avenged, now.

ZOÏLUS. I'll prove it by my notice of your next poem in the ——. Let us turn to our remaining models. Whatever may be thought of them at home, they have all made a very positive impression in England; how do you account for it, Ancient?

THE ANCIENT. I can only guess at an explanation, apart from the merits which three of them certainly possess. While the average literary culture in England was perhaps never so high as now, the prevalent style of writing was never so conventional. The sensational school, which has been so popular here as well as there, is beginning to fatigue the majority of readers, yet it still spoils their enjoyment of simple, honest work; so, every new appearance in literature, which is racy, which carries the flavor of a fresh soil with it, unconventional yet seemingly natural, neither suggesting the superficial refinement of which they are surfeited nor the nobler refinement which they have forgotten how to relish, — all such appearances, I suspect, furnish just the change they crave.

THE GANNET. But the changes of popular taste in the two countries are very similar. This is evident in the cases of Bret Harte and Hay; but Walt Whitman seems to have a large circle of enthusiastic admirers in England, and only some half-dozen disciples among us. Do you suppose that the passages of his "Leaves of Grass," which are prose catalogues to us, or the phrases which are our slang, have a kind of poetical charm there, because they are not understood?

ZOÏLUS. As Tartar or Mongolian "Leaves of Grass" might have to us? Very likely. There are splendid lines and brief passages in Walt Whitman: there is a modern, half-Bowery-boy, half-Emersonian apprehension of the old Greek idea of physical life, which many take to be wholly new on account of the singular form in which it is presented. I will even admit that the elements of a fine poet exist in him, in a state of chaos. It is curious that while he proclaims his human sympathies to be without bounds, his intellectual sympathies should be so narrow. There never was a man at once so arrogant, and so tender towards his fellow-men.

THE ANCIENT. You have very correctly described him. The same art which he despises would have increased his power and influence. He forgets that the poet must not only have somewhat to say, but must strenuously acquire the power of saying it most purely and completely. A truer sense of art would have prevented that fault which has been called immorality, but is only a coarse, offensive frankness.

THE GANNET. Let us divide our labors. There is only one name apiece: how shall we apportion them?

ZOÏLUS. Take Joaquin Miller, and give Walt Whitman to the Ancient. Choose of these two, Galahad!

GALAHAD (*opening the paper*). Bret Harte.

ZOÏLUS. Then Hay remains to me.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(*They all write steadily for half an hour.*)

THE GANNET. Our last is our most difficult task; for we have to give the local flavor of the poetry, as well as its peculiar form and tone.

ZOÏLUS. I should like to know how much of that local flavor is genuine. I am suspicious of Bret Harte's California dialect: some features of it are evidently English, and very suggestive of Dickens. Hay's is nearer the real thing. Miller's scenery and accessories also inspire me with doubt. Now, much of the value of this *genre* poetry (as I should call it) depends upon its fidelity to nature. Sham slang and sham barbarism are worse than sham refinement and luxury.

THE ANCIENT. Harte's use of "which" as an expletive is certainly an English peculiarity, which he may have heard it in some individual miner, but which it is not a feature of California slang. So, when Miggles says, "O, if you please, I 'm Miggles," it is an English girl who speaks. Aside from a few little details of this kind, Harte's sketches and poems are truly and admirably colored. He deserves his success, for he has separated himself by a broad gulf from all the literary buffoonery of this day, which is sometimes grotesque and always inane. But he is *picturesque*, and the coarsest humor of his characters rests on a pure human pathos.

GALAHAD. Somehow, the use of a vulgar dialect in poetry is always unpleasant to me; it is like a grinning mask over a beautiful face. And yet, how charming is "'Zekel's Courtship"!

THE ANCIENT. Lowell has done all that is possible with the New England dialect. He has now and then steeped it in an odor of poetry which it never before exhaled and perhaps never may again. Compare it, for instance, with the Scotch of Burns, where every elision makes the word sweeter on the tongue, and where the words which are its special property are nearly always musical. The New England changes are generally on the side of roughness and clumsiness. *With* becomes an ugly *'th*, instead of the soft Scotch *wi'*; *have* hardens into *hev*, instead of flowing into *hae*; and *got* coarsens into *gut*, instead of the quaint sharpness of *gat*. It is the very opposite of the mellow broadness of the Scotch; it sacrifices the vowels and aggravates the consonants; its raciest qualities hint of prevarication and noncommital, and its sentiment is grotesque even when it is frank and touching. Yet Lowell's genius sometimes so completely transfigures this harsh material, that one's ear forgets it and hears only the finer music of his thought.

ZOÏLUS. Shall we read? I suggest that we take the authors, to-night, in the order of their appearance. Walt Whitman leads.

THE ANCIENT. (*Reads.*)

CAMERADOS.

Everywhere, everywhere, following me;
Taking me by the buttonhole, pulling off my boots, hustling me with the elbows;
Sitting down with me to clams and the chowder-kettle;
Plunging naked at my side into the sleek, irascible surges;
Soothing me with the strain that I neither permit nor prohibit;
Flocking this way and that, reverent, eager, orotund, irrepressible;
Denser than sycamore leaves when the north-winds are scouring Paumanok;
What can I do to restrain them? Nothing, verily nothing.
Everywhere, everywhere, crying aloud for me;
Crying, I hear; and I satisfy them out of my nature;
And he that comes at the end of the feast shall find something over.
Whatever they want I give; though it be something else, they shall have it.
Drunkard, leper, Tammanyite, small-pox, and cholera patient, shoddy, and cod-fish millionnaire,
And the beautiful young men, and the beautiful young women, all the same,
Crowding, hundreds of thousands, cosmical multitudes,
Buss me and hang on my hips and lean up to my shoulders,
Everywhere listening to my yawp and glad whenever they hear it;
Everywhere saying, say it, Walt, we believe it:
Everywhere, everywhere.

ZOÏLUS. By Jove, Ancient! you could soon develop into a Kosmos.

THE ANCIENT. It would not be difficult, so far as the form is concerned. The immortal Tupper, in his rivalry with Solomon, substituted semi-rhyth-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mical prose lines for verse; but Walt, being thoroughly in earnest, often makes his lines wholly rhythmical. I confess I enjoy his decameters and hecatameters.

THE CHORUS. Bret Harte was the next appearance, after a very long interval. You will have to do your best, Galahad.

GALAHAD. A superficial imitation is easy enough, but I shall certainly fail to reproduce his subtile wit and pathos. (*Reads.*)

TRUTHFUL JAMES'S SONG OF THE SHIRT.

Which his name it was Sam;
He had sluiced for a while
Up at Murderer's Dam,
Till he got a good pile,
And the heft of each dollar,
Two thousand or more,
He 'd put in the Chollar,
For he seed it was ore
That runs thick up and down, without ceilin' or floor.

And, says he, it 's a game
That 's got but one stake;
If I put up that same,
It 'll bust me or make.
At fifty the foot
I 've entered my pile,
And the whole derned cahoot
I 'll let soak for a while,
And jest loaf around here, — say, Jim, will you smile?

Tom Fakes was the chum,
Down in Frisco, of Sam;
And one mornin' there come
This here telegram:
"You can sell for five hundred,
Come down by the train!"
Sam By-Joed and By-Thundered, —
'T was whistlin' quite plain,
And down to Dutch Flat rushed with might and with main.

He had no time to sarch,
But he grabbed up a shirt
That showed bilin' and starch,
And a coat with less dirt.
He jumped on the step
As the train shoved away,
And likewise was swep',
All galliant and gay,
Round the edge of the mounting and down to'rds the Bay.

Seven minutes, to pass
Through the hole by the Flat!
Says he, I 'm an ass
If I can't shift in that!
But the train behind time,
Only *three* was enough, —
It came pat as a rhyme —
He was stripped to the buff
When they jumped from the tunnel to daylight! 'T was rough.

What else? Here 's to you!
Which he sold of his feet
At five hundred, 't is true,
And the same I repeat:
But acquaintances, friends,
They likes to divert,
And the tale never ends
Of Sam and his shirt,
And to stop it from goin' he 'd give all his dirt!

ZOÏLUS. You were right to take a merely comical incident. You could n't possibly have echoed the strong feeling which underlies the surface slang of such a poem as "Jim," which I consider Harte's masterpiece in his special vein.

GALAHAD. He never could have written that if he had been only a humorist. His later work shows that he is a genuine poet.

THE ANCIENT. Yes, that special vein is like many in the Nevada mines, rich on the surface, narrowing as it goes down, pinched off by the primitive strata, opening again unexpectedly into a pocket, but never to be fully depended upon. Harte's instincts are too true not to see this: I believe he will do still better, and therefore probably less popular work.

THE GANNET. Now, Zoïlus, give us Hay, and let *me* close with a war-whoop!

ZOÏLUS. I 'm not quite sure of my Pike dialect, but I fancy the tone is rough enough to satisfy you. (*Reads.*)

BIG BILL.

There 's them that eats till they 're bustin',
And them that drinks till they 're blind,
And them that 's snufflin' and spooney,
But the best of all, to my mind,
(And I 've been around in my time, boys,
And cavorted with any you like,)
Was Big Bill, that lived in the slashes,
We called him Big Bill o' Pike.

If he put his hand to his bowie
Or scratched the scruff of his neck,
You could only tell by waitin'
To see if you bled a peck:
And the way he fired, 't was lovely!
Nobody knowed which was dead,
Till Big Bill grinned, and the stiff 'un
Tumbled over onto his head!

At school he killed his master;
Courtin', he killed seven more;
And the hearse was always a-waitin'
A little ways from his door.
There was n't much growth in the county,
As the census returns will show,
But we had Big Bill we was proud of,
And that was enough to grow.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And now Big Bill is an angel, —
Damn me, it makes me cry!
Jist when he was rampin' the roughest,
The poor fellow had to die.
A thievin' and sneakin' Yankee
Got the start on our blessed Bill,
And there 's no one to do our killin'
And nobody left to *kill*!

ZOÏLUS. Hay's realism, in those ballads, is of the grimmest kind. It is like the old Dance of Death, in a new form. I have been greatly amused by the actual fury which his "Little Breeches" and "Jim Bludso" have aroused in some sectarian quarters. To read the attacks, one would suppose that Christianity was threatened by the declaration that angels may interpose to save children, or that a man, ignorant or regardless of ordinary morality, may redeem his soul by the noblest sacrifice. Really, it seems to me, that to diminish the range of individual damnation renders many good people unhappy.

THE ANCIENT. Hay has made his name known in the most legitimate way, — by representing phenomena of common Western life which he has observed. He might have faintly echoed Shelley or Tennyson for a decade, and accomplished nothing. Those ballads are not, strictly speaking, poetry; but it is impossible that they should not give him a tendency to base his better poems on the realities of our American life.

THE CHORUS. Let us hear the Gannet's war-whoop!

THE GANNET. There is nothing easier than to exaggerate exaggeration. (*Reads.*)

THE FATE OF THE FRONTIERSMAN.

That whiskey-jug! For, dry or wet,
My tale will need its help, you bet!

We made for the desert, she and I,
Though life was loathsome, and love a lie,
And she gazed on me with her glorious eye,
But all the same, — I let her die!
For why? — there was barely water for one
In the small canteen, and of provender, none!
A splendid snake, with an emerald scale,
Shd before us along the trail,
With a famished parrot pecking its head;
And, seizing a huge and dark brown rock
In her dark brown hands, as you crush a crock,
With the dark brown rock she crushed it dead.
But ere her teeth in its flesh could meet,
I laid her as dead as the snake at my feet,
And grabbed the snake for myself to eat.

The plain stretched wide, from side to side,
As bare and blistered and cracked and dried
As a moccasin sole of buffalo hide,
And my throat grew hot, as I walked the trail,
My blood in a sizzle, my muscles dry,
A crimson glare in my glorious eye,
And I felt my sinews wither and fail,
Like one who has lavished, for fifty nights,
His pile in a hell of gambling delights,
And is kicked at dawn, from bottle and bed,
And sent to the gulches without a red.
There was no penguin to pick or pluck,
No armadillo's throat to be stuck,
Not even a bilberry's ball of blue
To slush my tongue with its indigo dew,
And the dry brown palm-trees rattled and roared
Like the swish and swizzle of Walker's sword.
I was nigh rubbed out; when, far away,
A shanty baked in the furnace of day,
And I petered on, for an hour or more,
Till I dropped, like a mangy hound, at the door.

No soul to be seen; but a basin stood
On the bench, with a mess of dubious food,
Stringy and doughy and lumpy and thick,
As the clay ere flame has turned it to brick.
I gobbled it up with a furious fire,
A prairie squall of hungry desire,
And strength came back; when, lo! a scream
Closed my stomach and burst my dream.
She stood before me, as lithe and tall
As a musqueet-bush on the Pimos wall,
Fierce as the Zuñi panther's leap,
Fair as the slim Apache sheep.
A lariat draped her broad brown hips,
As she stood and glared with parted lips,
While piercing stitches and maddening shoots
Ran through my body, from brain to boots.
I would have clasped her, but, ere I could,
She flung back her hair's tempestuous hood,
And screamed, in a voice like a tiger-cat's:
"You 've gone and ett up my pizen for rats!"
My blood grew limp and my hair grew hard
As the steely tail of the desert pard:
I sank at her feet, convulsed and pale,
And kissed in anguish her brown toe-nail.
You may rip the cloud from the frescoed sky,
Or tear the man from his place in the moon,
Fur from the buzzard and plumes from the coon,
But you can't tear me from the truth I cry,
That life is loathsome and love a lie.
She lifted me up to her bare brown face,
She cracked my ribs in her brown embrace,
And there in the shanty, side by side,
Each on the other's bosom died.

She 's now the mistress of Buffalo Bill,
And pure as the heart of a lily still;
While I 've killed all who have cared for me,
And I 'm just as lonely as I can be,
So, pass the whiskey, — we 'll have a spree!

OMNES. The real thing!

ZOÏLUS. You 've beaten us all, but no wonder! Much of Joaquin Miller's verse is itself a travesty of poetry. Ancient, you talk about high ideals of lit-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

erary art, and all that sort of thing: can you tell me what Rossetti and the rest of the English critics mean, in hailing this man as the great American poet?

THE ANCIENT. One thing, of course, they cannot see, — the thorough spuriousness of his characters, with their costumes, scenery, and all other accessories. Why, he takes Lara and the Giaour, puts them in a fantastic, impossible country called "Arizona" or "California," and describes them with a rhythm borrowed from Swinburne and a frenzy all his own, — and we are called upon to accept this as something original and grand! The amazed admiration of a class in England, and the gushing gratitude of one in America, form, together, a spectacle over which the pure, serene gods must bend in convulsions of inextinguishable laughter.

ZOÏLUS. Give me your hand! As Thackeray says, let us swear eternal friendship! You have often provoked me by persistently mollifying my judgments of authors; but, if you had done so in this case, I could not have forgiven you. Joaquin Miller, and he alone, would prove the decadence of our literature: he is an Indianized copy of Byron, made up of shrieks and war-paint, and the life he describes is too brutal, selfish, and insane ever to have existed anywhere. A few fine lines or couplets, or an occasional glittering bit of description, are not enough to make him a genius, or even an unusual talent.

THE GANNET. But the material — not *his*, the true Arizonian material — is good, and he has shown shrewdness in selecting it. He is clever, in some ways, or he never could have made so much capital in England. His temporary success here is only an echo of his success there.

ZOÏLUS. If he were a young fellow of twenty, I should say, wait; but his is not the exaggeration of youth, it is the affectation of manhood.

GALAHAD. If anybody ever seriously said, "Alas!" I should say it now. I have picked up many a grain of good counsel in the midst of our fun, and the fun itself has become an agreeable stimulus which I shall miss. We must not give up our habit wholly.

ZOÏLUS. There is no end of intellectual and poetic gymnastics, which we may try. I propose that we close with a grand satirical American "Walpurgis-Night," modelled on Goethe's Intermezzo in *Faust*.

THE GANNET. That is a good idea, but how shall we carry it out?

ZOÏLUS. Let each write a stanza or two, satirizing some literary school, author, magazine, or newspaper, throw it into the hat, and then take another, as long as we can keep up the game. When all are exhausted, give the hat to the Ancient and let him read the whole collection of squibs, in the order in which they turn up.

OMNES (*eagerly*). Accepted!

[Here, I am compelled to state, my liberty as a reporter ceases. The plan was carried out, and I think it was not entirely unsuccessful. But our mirth was partly at the expense of others: many of the stanzas were only lively and good-humored, but many others thrust out a sharp sting in the last line. As I was not an accomplice, I was perfectly willing that they should all be given to the public. Zoïlus did not seriously object; but the other three were peremptory in their prohibition. Even the Gannet confessed that he was not courageous enough to run the risk of making half a dozen permanent enemies by shafts of four lines apiece: he knew how largely the element of *personal* profit and reputation enters into American literary life, and how touchy a sensitiveness it develops. There was no denying this, for they related many instances to prove it. I yielded, of course, although it was a disappointment to me. After having thus entered authorship by a side-door, as it were, I find the field very pleasant; and I withdraw now, since there is no alternative, with reluctance. — THE NAMELESS REPORTER.]

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHY SEMMES OF THE ALABAMA WAS NOT TRIED.

PART I.

IN December, 1865, the public mind was startled by the announcement that "the pirate Semmes," as he was commonly called, had been arrested in Mobile by order of the Secretary of the Navy, brought to Washington as a prisoner, and closely confined in the Marine Barracks.

It was rumored that Semmes was to be tried by court-martial or military commission, though upon what charge or for what offence the public knew not.

As the Rebellion was ended, and Semmes, who had been paroled under the Sherman-Johnston military convention and sent home to Mobile, had quietly engaged in civil life, some surprise was occasioned by his arrest and imprisonment. A few discreet Union men regretted this proceeding, but the general feeling was one of satisfaction, if not of exultation.

The exploits of Semmes were by no means forgotten by any one; and they rankled in the memories of thousands who had suffered from the depredations of the Sumter and Alabama.

In less than seven months of 1861–62, the Sumter had captured eighteen vessels.*

The Alabama had done still greater mischief. Between September 7, 1862, and April 27, 1864, she captured or destroyed sixty-two merchantmen and whalers, and one ship-of-war.†

Such enormous destruction of ships, and the consequent interruption of commerce, had made the name of Semmes both terrible during the war, and hateful after it, to every Federal ship-owner, master, seaman, and insurer; and this prevalent dislike was increased by the fact that the Alabama, as far as possible, and as if fearful of fight, avoided encounter with naval vessels, and was envenomed by her long and successful efforts to escape our cruisers, while making such havoc with unarmed ships in every sea, as well as by the evasion of her commander from Captain Winslow and the Kearsarge, in an English yacht, under shelter of the British flag, thus rendering our victory a mere triumph over lifeless wood and iron; while the fiery captain, who had alone made the Alabama mischievous, eluded the grasp of his antagonist, and was again ready to command new Alabamas, and repeat his career of capture and burning.

It was, moreover, reported and believed that Semmes had violated the laws of war by cruelties inflicted upon unresisting victims, by perfidious conduct at Cherbourg during and after the fight, and that he had knavishly contrived to obtain a parole as Brigadier-General, to which he was not entitled.

No name connected with the Rebel service, unless that of some spy, "bushwhacker," or guerilla of the grossest criminality, was so generally detested as that of Raphael Semmes. Harsh epithets were heaped upon him, not only by sailors and master-mariners, and merchants whose ships and goods had blazed under his torch, not only by "sensational" reporters and editors, but by some of our gravest writers and highest dignitaries, by whom he was habitually stigmatized as "freebooter," "rover," "corsair," and "pirate." Thus, for example, Mr. Everett, in August, 1864, some six weeks after the engagement which ended in

* Seven of these were sent to Cuba as prizes, but were restored by the Spanish authorities to their original owners; two were recaptured, two released on ransom, and seven were burned. One only was burned, however, until after these recaptures and restorations had convinced Semmes that all attempt to send his captures in for adjudication was a waste of both time and men.

† The U. S. steamer Hatteras was sunk; seven vessels were admitted to ransom; one was made a cartel; the other fifty-four were burned as soon as captured.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the sinking of the Alabama, contributed to the "New York Ledger" an article entitled "The Pirate Alabama, by Edward Everett," whose purpose was to denounce Semmes, not only as a pirate, but as capable and guilty of habitual violations of honor, courage, municipal law, and the law of nations.

When Mr. Everett wrote this article, he knew that Captain Winslow, of the Kearsarge, had treated the officers and men of the Alabama who fell into his hands, not as pirates, corsairs, or freebooters, but as belligerents, prisoners of war, by admitting them to parole; that by establishing a blockade of Confederate ports, our government had recognized the Confederates as belligerents, if not as a belligerent state, and had thus confessed that Confederate officers and men, military or naval, could not be treated as pirates or guerillas, so long as they obeyed the laws of war; that the same recognition was made when cartels for exchange of prisoners were established between the Federal and Confederate authorities; and, above all, when the Federal executive, after the courts had declared Confederate privateersmen to be pirates, had deliberately set aside those judgments, and admitted the captured and condemned officers and men of the Savannah and the Jeff Davis to exchange as prisoners of war.*

In the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy, dated December, 1864, the Alabama is a "piratical cruiser" that "roamed the seas, robbing and destroying, ... shunning all armed antagonists." The Alabama and Florida are "rovers" which had "never, during their entire piratical career, sent in for adjudication and condemnation a single ship or cargo"; and "corsairs" perpetrating "robberies, stealing chronometers," "plundering" and burning vessels, etc. Alluding to the fight off Cherbourg, that Report says that Semmes's "conduct on this occasion" was marked by "the same dishonor" as his "whole ignoble career"; that before leaving Cherbourg for the fight, which he himself had challenged, Semmes "deposited the chronometers and other trophies of his robberies on shore"; and "when beaten and compelled to surrender, he threw overboard the sword that was no longer his own, and, abusing the generous confidence of his brave antagonist, stole away in the English tender, whose owner proved himself, by his conduct, a fit companion for the dishonored and beaten corsair."

Proceeding *fervido animo*, — the fervor somewhat confusing the process of thought, — the Report complains that this "corsair" disregarded the laws of war by running away after his offer of surrender; as though "pirates" were subject to those laws. "Having surrendered," says the Report, Semmes "cannot relieve himself of his obligations as *a prisoner of war*, until he shall be *regularly exchanged*."

The feelings thus expressed by eminent men in 1864, and which were universally diffused, continued, with little diminution, to inflame the public mind in December, 1865; and it is less surprising that Semmes was at last arrested, than that so many months were allowed to pass before he was seized at Mobile, and imprisoned to await trial at Washington.

The manner of his arrest is described by Semmes himself, with reasonable accuracy, in these words: —

"On the night of the 15th of December, 1865, or seven months and a half after I had received the guaranty of General Sherman, at Greensboro', North Carolina, that I should not be molested by the United States authorities, a lieutenant of the Marine Corps, with a guard of soldiers, surrounded my house, and arrested me on an order from Mr. Gideon Welles, without the

* The reluctance with which this recognition was granted does not affect its validity. After having refused, again and again, President Davis's offers of exchange, the Federal executive, being at last notified that fourteen Union prisoners — six colonels, two lieutenant-colonels, three majors, and three captains — had been shut up in felons' cells, to be hung whenever the Confederate privateers were executed, concluded to regard those "pirates" as lawful belligerents entitled to exchange.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

process of any court. I was torn from my family, under guard, and hurried off to Washington. I was kept a close prisoner, with a sentinel at my door, for nearly four months." *

Semmes was not so suddenly "torn from his family," nor "hurried off" so precipitately, as to prevent his writing a formal protest against his arrest to General Woods, then in command at Mobile, in which he claims exemption from such arrest by virtue of his parole under the Greensboro' convention, as he again does in his letter to General Sherman, two days after his arrest, and as he subsequently did in several communications to President Andrew Johnson.

As Semmes relied upon this "guaranty" as a bar of all proceedings that might be commenced or conducted, in any court, civil or military, for any act done by him during the Rebellion, I will give his account of the circumstances attending his surrender and parole, and also the form of parole, and the article of the Sherman-Johnston military convention under which it was received.

He says: "The country is familiar with what occurred at Greensboro' between Johnston and Sherman. . . . . Sherman entered into an agreement . . . . that the Southern States should be regarded as *ipso facto* on the cessation of the war, restored to their rights in the Union. . . . . Stanton rejected the convention, reminding Sherman that he was nothing but a soldier. . . . . He now entered into *a purely military convention.*† The main features of that convention were, that Johnston should disperse his army, and that Sherman should, in consideration thereof, guarantee it against molestation by the Federal authorities. Commissioners appointed by the two generals met . . . . May 1, 1865"; namely, "Brevet Brigadier-General Hartsuff, on the part of the Federals, and Colonel Mason, on the part of the Confederates. Each guaranty of non-molestation had been prepared beforehand, in a printed form, and signed by Hartsuff, and only required to be filled up with the name and rank of the party entitled to receive it, and signed by myself, to be complete. . . . . I produced the muster-roll of my command. The general counted out an equal number of blank guaranties, and, handing them to me, said, 'You have only to fill up one of these for each officer and soldier of your command, with his name and rank, and sign it and hand it to him. I have already signed them myself. You can fill up the one intended for yourself in like manner.' 'With regard to the latter,' I replied, 'I prefer, if you have no objection, to have it filled up and completed here in your presence.' 'O, that makes no difference,' he replied. 'Very well,' said I; 'if it makes no difference, you can have no objection to complying with my request.' He now called an aide-de-camp, and, desiring him to be seated at the table where we were, told him to fill up my guaranty after my dictation. I gave him my titles separately, making him write me down a Rear-Admiral in the Confederate States Navy, and a Brigadier-General in the Confederate States Army. When he had done this, he handed me the paper. I signed it, and put it in my pocket, and turning to the general, said, 'I am now satisfied.'"

Semmes's account proceeds as follows: "It was well I took the precaution above described; for when I was afterwards arrested, the Yankee press, howling for my blood, claimed that I had deceived the paroling officer, and obtained my parole under false pretences, the said paroling officer not dreaming, when he was paroling one

* I quote from "Memoirs of Service afloat, during the War between the States, by Admiral Raphael Semmes, of the late Confederate States Navy, author of 'Service afloat and ashore during the Mexican War,'" published at Baltimore in 1869. This book, under a slightly different title, was published in London the same year. Semmes never was "Admiral," but then he was Brigadier-General when paroled in May, 1865; and as he omits this title from his title-page, we may forgive him for overstating his naval rank.

† I underscore these words to impress them on my reader's mind. Semmes seems not to have realized their full import.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Brigadier-General Semmes, that he had the veritable 'pirate' before him."

While it is not unlikely that General Hartsuff may have been far from suspecting that Rear-Admiral, Brigadier-General Semmes was Commander Semmes of the Alabama, there is no probability that such ignorance influenced his conduct, or that he would have treated "the veritable pirate" any differently, whatever had been his knowledge of his past career; for neither he nor any "Yankee press" ever supposed that a military convention, or parole, was a "guaranty" against criminal liability.*

The parole is in these words: "In accordance with the terms of the military convention entered into, etc., R. Semmes, Rear-Admiral and Brigadier-General, C. S. Navy and C. S. Army, commanding brigade, has given his solemn obligation not to take up arms against the government of the United States, until properly released from this obligation; and is permitted to return to his home, not to be disturbed by the United States authorities so long as he observes this obligation, and obeys the laws in force where he may reside."

The fifth article of the convention referred to provided that the Confederate officers and men who surrendered to Sherman, should "be permitted to return to their homes, not to be disturbed by the United Stated authorities so long as they observe their obligations, and the laws in force where they reside."

On the sixth day of January, 1866, Semmes, by his counsel, wrote to the President, reiterating the opinions which he had already urged upon General Wood and General Sherman. Five days afterwards, there was published in the Washington newspapers an opinion of Attorney-General Speed, in which that officer asserted that Confederates' guilty of violations of the laws of war might be tried for such offences by military courts, notwithstanding their surrender and parole under military conventions.

This opinion led to a second letter, dated January 15, 1866, from Semmes to the President, written at great length, and giving the fullest expression to his peculiar views. The letter recites the fifth article already quoted, and asserts that Semmes's arrest and detention are infractions of that convention. "The question for you, then, to decide, Mr. President," says this letter, "is the legality of this arrest"; and the writer insists that he cannot, legally, "be held to answer for *any act of war* committed anterior to the convention." He argues that every violation of the laws of war is an act of war, for the perpetration of which, no matter how monstrous the crime may be, he can never be held, or tried, by any tribunal.

He thus confounds two things utterly unlike, and lays down a proposition that shocks humanity, and is at variance with well-settled cases and doctrines. The wilful torture and starvation of prisoners, in the case of Wirz; incendiary attempts in peaceful cities, in the case of Kennedy; the attempt to throw railroad trains from the track, in States remote from the seat of war, in Beall's case, — were held, and properly held, to be no more acts of war than is the poisoning of wells or the massacre of infants, or any other wanton outrage upon the helpless and unoffending. This joinder of incongruities, this confusion of *res insociabiles*, this *discordia rerum*, betrays not only mental blindness, but a perversity of heart that would relegate civilized warfare back to and beyond the barbarisms and horrors of three thousand years ago.

"I did not surrender unconditionally," says this letter, "but upon terms; .... nor is it consistent with good faith to qualify or restrain those terms, so as to make them inapplicable to acts of war that may be claimed to have been in violation of the laws of war; for this would be to refine away all the protection which has been thrown around me by treaty, and put me in the power of

* These extracts are from the book of Semmes already cited.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the opposite contracting party, who might put his own construction upon the laws of war." This, as Semmes alleged, was the attempt made by the Secretary of the Navy in ordering his arrest, imprisonment, and trial.

Upon Semmes's theory it was quite immaterial whether he had, or had not, either occasionally or habitually, carelessly or with deliberate malignity, disregarded the law and usage of war; yet he denies, and in this letter seeks to disprove, that he had been guilty of any such crime. Forgetting that he had described the convention under which he was paroled as "a purely military convention," he insists that this convention, having been approved by the President as Commander-in-Chief, at Washington, had acquired the force of a treaty, and had become of perpetual and universal obligation to protect him from prosecution and punishment for any offence committed by him prior to its date, and refers to the delay in ordering his arrest as proof that the administration had so regarded it.

So confident was he in this opinion, and of President Johnson's concurrence therein, that he cast himself unreservedly into the President's hands, and made him his sole judge. He said, "I put it to you, Mr. President, as a man and a magistrate, to *say*, and I will rest my case on your *answer*, whether it was consistent with honor and fair dealing for this government, first to entrap me, and then, having me in its power, to arrest me and declare that convention null and void."

For "answer" to this application, the President referred it to the Secretary of the Navy, upon whose charge and by whose order the arrest of Semmes had been made. To him and to the law officer of his department was allotted the duty of determining whether Semmes should be tried, and, if yea, for what crimes or offences and upon what charges and specifications. It was understood that President Johnson would not allow a military court to try Semmes for simple piracy or treason, but only for offences against that code of law which governs all belligerents.

The first question upon which I had, as Solicitor and Naval Judge Advocate General, to advise the Secretary, after Semmes had been brought as a prisoner to Washington,* was whether, under the military convention and parole which Semmes so earnestly pressed upon the executive notice, and which he would, of course, plead in bar of trial, whenever arraigned, he could lawfully be tried.

My own opinion was, that capitulations of surrender do not deal with the surrendering force as criminals; that if they attempt so to do, they trespass on the civil authority and its functions; and that such trespass is illegal. The belligerent who has conformed to the laws of war is never regarded by his opponent as a culprit, although, if taken prisoner, he may be held in confinement to prevent his again becoming an active enemy. But this detention, whether by actual imprisonment or by the obligation of a parole, is not a punishment for misconduct.

Neither capture, confinement, parole, exchange, nor discharge under capitulation can affect the criminal liability of an offender against municipal or public laws. Principle and precedent concur in showing that no form of military protection is a shield against such liability. Neither passport nor flag of truce can protect a spy or a deserter; and good American authority has held that a prisoner of war under the safeguard of a capitulation may be selected for punishment by way of retaliation.†

I had no legal doubts upon this sub-

* Until Semmes had been thus brought to Washington, I had had no knowledge of any proceedings against him.

† Washington seized Badgely and Hatfield as deserters, though covered by a flag of truce; and to an application for their release, he declared that the flag could not screen either deserters or criminals. Arnold's passport could not save André. When the English Captain Lippincott murdered Huddy, Washington threatened, unless Lippincott were given up for trial, to hang some English captain chosen by lot from among prisoners held under capitulation.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ject. The Attorney-General was equally confident. But it was a grave question, and I wished to fortify my opinion by that of publicists and jurists of the greatest weight and reputation. I therefore took counsel of Charles Eames, Esq., of Washington, now, alas, dead, but then in the zenith of his bright career; full of learning, inspired by genius, and inspiring by his eloquence. I conferred, also, with Charles Sumner and Caleb Cushing, whose names are themselves titles of distinction, and whose concurring judgments confirmed my conviction that Semmes was still amenable to justice, and subject to trial for any offence against the rules of civilized warfare.

I applied, of course, to Dr. Francis Lieber, in whose learning and devotion to the Union the government and people of his adopted country fully confided, and whose friendly aid I had enjoyed in several important military trials while I was acting as Judge-Advocate of the Military Department of the East. "There can be no doubt," answered Dr. Lieber, "that we have a perfect right to try him for any offence beyond that of fighting against his legitimate government. The agreement between him and General Hartsuff is a strictly military agreement. It is no pardon for any offences, not even for the offence of having traitorously carried arms against his own country. No agreement, contract, or convention can cover more than its own character and nature imply. This is a question between belligerents. It says, 'Instead of making you an actual prisoner, I let you go on parole,'" etc.

Professor Lieber, in communicating this opinion, kindly stated that it had the support of Dr. Theodore W. Dwight, his colleague in the Law School in New York; and referred me, for a more elaborate expression of his views, to an article of his own, published in the "Independent." He also reminded me that, in 1863, "instructions for the government of armies of the United States" had been prepared by him, under the direction of President Lincoln, by whom they were approved after revision by a board of army officers, and which became the now world-famous "GENERAL ORDER No. 100," of that year's issue of the War Department.

"Paragraph 59" of that "order" contains these words: —

"A prisoner of war remains answerable for his crimes committed against his captor's army or people before he was captured, and for which he has not been punished by his own authorities."

This "order" was made known at the date of its issue (1863) to the Confederate rebels, and it notified them what to expect at our hands, if they surrendered. As Dr. Lieber remarked, "We have fought on this proclamation, and there has been no misunderstanding on this point."

From President Woolsey of Yale College, himself a leading author and authority on public law, and from Professor Twining of the Yale Law School, I received, in like manner, prompt and friendly answers to my application, containing full and able opinions, corroborating those of Eames, Sumner, Cushing, Lieber, and Dwight. For their generous assistance all these learned and patriotic jurists deserve, and have, my warmest gratitude.

These opinions, supported by the precedents of Marshal Ney and of the Crimean case quoted by Lieber in the "Independent," determined the Secretary of the Navy to bring Semmes to trial, provided the evidence should, upon careful preliminary examination, seem strong enough to sustain the charge of "violation of the laws of war."

The precedents just named are as follows: —

Marshal Ney "first deserted the Emperor and joined the Allied forces which restored Louis XVIII. to the French throne. On Napoleon's escape from Elba, Ney deserted Louis, and returned to his old master, for whom he fought during the famous "hundred days." After the capitulation of Paris to the Allies, July 3, 1815, which in-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cluded Ney, who was then in the French capital, he was arraigned upon the charge of treason, and pleaded the capitulation in bar of trial.

Article twelve of the capitulation stipulated that not only the inhabitants, but "all persons in the capital should continue to enjoy their rights and liberties without being disturbed or brought in question, in respect of any functions in which they had been engaged relative to their conduct or politics."

This article was held by the Duke of Wellington, and by the Chamber of Peers which formed the court for Ney's trial, to be "purely a military convention," as Semmes described the Sherman-Johnston convention, and not to affect the rights of the French government to prosecute and punish Ney for his treason. His plea was overruled, conviction followed, and a few hours after sentence he was shot.

It may have been, and doubtless was, foolish, cruel, and unjust to carry this sentence into execution. But all Europe acknowledged that the convention was correctly construed, and that Ney was fairly tried.

During the Crimean War, a Russian officer taken prisoner by the French and English troops was accused of inciting his men to mutilate and kill wounded enemies lying helpless on the field of battle. For this brutal violation of the law of war he was tried by a court-martial convened by his captors, found guilty, and executed. Accounts of this trial and execution of this prisoner of war were published in the journals of different European countries, and nowhere was any disapprobation expressed against the procedure or the principle. Both were everywhere felt and admitted to be right.* These principles and precedents settled the question of legal liability. And so it was decided that Semmes should be tried, if, on inquiry, he was clearly an offender.

The next question to be answered, then, was, whether he had been guilty of any, and, if any, what, offences against the law and usages of war.

This general inquiry was considered and pursued under various detailed and specific forms, namely: —

1. Was it such offence to attack, capture, and destroy our unresisting private vessels, and their cargoes, without any effort to send them in for adjudication?

2. Had Semmes, and if yea, in what cases, and how, maltreated his captives, or been guilty of culpable cruelty?

3. Was his conduct criminally perfidious at or after the engagement between the Kearsarge and Alabama, off Cherbourg?

4. Was any one, and which, of the crafty tricks and expedients resorted to by Semmes for the purpose of concealing or misrepresenting the real character and purpose of his ship — or, as Mr. Everett expressed it, for the purpose of "cheating into his power" the unarmed vessels on which he made such fatal warfare; or in effecting his hostile plans, such as extinguishing the light-houses at the mouth of the Mississippi in order to escape unseen by our blockading ships; or assuming the flag of the United States, or of any other recognized nationality; or burning captured vessels as decoys; or "stealing chronometers," or otherwise "plundering" from the vessels he seized and burned — was any one of these acts of fraud or force an offence against law?

5. If Semmes violated neutral rights, as, for example, by pursuing our vessels into neutral waters and there destroying them, is that an offence for which our government will bring him to trial as an offender against public law?

* Lieber says: "If it were discovered that a prisoner of war had been concerned in the poisoning, or other assassination of an enemy, before his capture, he would plainly remain answerable for the crime, and would be wholly unprotected by his status as prisoner of war; and the law and usages of war make no distinction as to obligations, or status, between the paroled prisoner and the prisoner in custody." The "Report on the Conduct of the War," Part III. pp. 4, 5, 17, 18, shows that General Sherman did not intend by his convention to screen any criminal.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some of these questions were promptly answered.

1. It was resolved that neutral powers should be left to vindicate their own rights in their own way.

2. It was concluded that if Semmes was so far a lawful belligerent as to be subject to the laws of war, he must, also, be entitled to all warlike rights, customs, and immunities, including the right to perform all of the customary cheats, falsifications, snares, decoys, false pretences, and swindles of civilized and Christian warfare; to "steal chronometers," or otherwise "plunder" before destroying his captures; and that although it might be an act of barbarism forbidden by public law to extinguish lighthouses in ports not under blockade, and thus wantonly endanger the lives and property of the whole commercial world, yet such an act is not criminal at places closely blockaded, as was New Orleans in June, 1861, when Semmes escaped from the mouth of the Mississippi and the vigilance of the Mohican.

It was also determined to collect from original sources all procurable evidence in regard to Semmes's treatment of prisoners, and his conduct during and after the sea-fight off Cherbourg, before attempting to prepare charges against him.

The other, and first above-stated inquiry, namely, that respecting the captor's duty of sending in captures for adjudication, was met and answered rather as a question of policy than as matter of public law. Without consulting publicist or jurisconsult, it was easily possible to see and show that we, as a government, could not afford to prosecute and punish as a criminal any naval officer for capturing and destroying the enemy's trading vessels, as fast as possible, not only without any attempt to send them in for adjudication, but with a determined purpose and policy not to do so.

This conclusion was the result of a careful study of our own naval history, and of a thoughtful examination of future possibilities in the event of war between the United States and some great commercial nation.

I will not dwell upon this last division of the topic, but content myself with a reference to that past theory and practice of our naval warfare, which rendered it impossible to punish Semmes for having learned and practised so successfully the lesson taught by our own instruction and example, in the Revolutionary War, when we were rebels, and in the last war (1812) with Great Britain.

The earlier records are imperfect; but enough can be gathered from our naval historian, Cooper, to show that many of the vessels captured in the war of the Revolution were destroyed at sea.

Of the history and policy of the later period we have abundant proofs. Not less than seventy-four British merchantmen were captured, and destroyed as soon as captured, under express instructions from the Navy Department, and in pursuance of a deliberate purpose and plan, without any attempt or intent to send or bring them in as prizes for adjudication. The orders of the department upon this subject are numerous, emphatic, and carefully prepared. They deserve to be studied and remembered; and they effectually silence all American right or disposition to complain of Semmes for having imitated our example, in obedience to similar orders from the Secretary of the Confederate Navy.

The instructions to which I refer were addressed to Captains David Porter and O. H. Perry, each in command of a squadron; to Captain Charles Stewart, of the Constitution, twice; to Captain Charles Morris, of the Congress; Commandant Lewis Warrington, of the Peacock; Commandant Johnston Blakely, of the Wasp; Master Commandant Joseph Bainbridge, of the Frolic; Master Commandant George Parker, of the Siren; Master Commandant John O. Creighton, of the Rattlesnake; Lieutenant William H. Allen, of the Argus; Lieutenant James

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Renshaw, of the Enterprise; and Master Ridgely, of the Erie.*

Extracts from the instructions of the department which led to these immediate burnings of captured vessels will best show the precise purpose and deliberate policy of the government.† I will, therefore, quote brief passages from some five or six different orders as samples of all.

"The great object," says one of them, "is the destruction of the commerce of the enemy, and the bringing into port the prisoners, in order to exchange against our unfortunate countrymen who may fall into his hands." "You will, therefore, man no prize, unless the value, place of capture, and other favorable circumstances shall render safe arrival morally certain." "You will not agree to the ransoming of any prize." "Grant no cartel, nor liberate any prisoners, unless under circumstances of extreme and unavoidable necessity."

In another it is said, "You will, therefore, unless in some extraordinary cases that shall clearly warrant an exception, destroy all you capture; and by thus retaining your crew and continuing your cruise, your services may be enhanced tenfold."

"I have it in command from the President strictly to prohibit the giving or accepting, directly or indirectly, a challenge to combat ship to ship."

Again: "Your own sound judgment and observation will sufficiently demonstrate to you how extremely precarious and injurious is the attempt to send in a prize, unless taken very near a friendly port, and under the most favorable circumstances..... Policy, interest, and duty combine to dictate the destruction of all captures, with the above exceptions."

Another: "The commerce of the enemy is the most vulnerable point of the enemy we can attack, and its destruction the main object; and to this end all your efforts should be directed. Therefore, unless your prizes should be very valuable and near a friendly port, it will be imprudent and worse than useless to attempt to send them in; the chances of recapture are excessively great; the crew, the safety of the ship under your command, would be diminished and endangered, as well as your own fame and the national honor, by hazarding a battle after the reduction of your officers and crew by manning prizes. In every point of view, then, it will be proper to destroy what you capture, except valuable and compact articles, that may be transshipped.* This system gives to one ship the force of many."

Another order says that "a single cruiser, if ever so successful, can man but a few prizes, and every prize is a serious diminution of her force; but a single cruiser, destroying every captured vessel, has the capacity of continuing, in full vigor, her destructive power, so long as her provisions and stores can be replenished, either from friendly ports or from the vessels captured..... Thus has a single cruiser, upon *the destructive plan*, the power, perhaps, of twenty acting upon pecuniary views alone;†.... and thus may the employment of our small force in some degree compensate for the great inequality [of our force] compared with that of the enemy."

Such were the policy and the orders of President Madison and of the Secretary of the Navy in 1812, 1813, 1814; and such beyond question would be the plan and the instructions of any

* Of the 74 captures made under these orders of instant destruction, 6 were by the Essex; 5 by the Constitution; 8 by the President; 8 by the corvette Adams; 1 each by the Hornet, the Chesapeake, and the Rattlesnake, in company with the Enterprise; 2 each by the Siren and Frolic; 11 by the Wasp; 13 by the Argus; and 14 by the Peacock.

† I copy, not merely from the original records, but from Peter Force's "American Archives," and from Congressional printed documents connected with the petitions of the gallant officers above-named, for an appropriation in lieu of prize; obedience to these "destructive" orders having deprived them of all benefit from their captures.

* Such as "chronometers"? What a curious comment is this upon the current complaints against Semmes, that he saved chronometers from the ships he captured and destroyed!

† That is, upon the hope of prize-money from captures sent in for adjudication.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

administration under like circumstances.

Not only did Semmes's official conduct conform to this well-known policy of the American Navy, but it was directed by similar instructions from the Secretary of the Confederate Navy. "Do the enemy's commerce the greatest injury in the shortest time," was Mr. Mallory's significant order to Semmes, in June, 1861; and never, in naval history, has such an order been so signally obeyed; never has there occurred so striking an example of the tremendous power of mischief possessed by a single cruiser acting upon this "destructive plan," as that furnished by the Sumter and her successor, the Alabama, under the command of Semmes, whose untiring activity, restless energy, and fiery zeal found no voyage too long, no movement too prompt or too rapid, no danger too great, no labor too wearisome, in the accomplishment of the Confederate purpose to ruin our commerce by destroying our ships and their cargoes, or driving them from the ocean. He was, probably, beyond all other men who had been trained in our navy, the man to carry out the "destructive policy"; and so fatally well did he perform his duty, that twenty years will scarcely suffice to restore our ships and commerce to their old prosperity.

Now, while it might be pardonable, even in Mr. Everett while writing for the "Ledger" and catering to popular taste or prejudice, to forget this most remarkable chapter and policy in our naval history and administration, it could not safely be forgotten or ignored by any law officer of the government, in preparing for the trial of Semmes, who was certain to plant his defence upon the precedents and practice of that navy in which he had been educated and employed, and who, moreover, was entitled to the full weight of those precedents with the executive while considering whether he ought to be held for trial. Justice required that the Rebel captain should be fairly treated, and I had no sympathy with those persons, official or unofficial, who denied courage and gallantry to Semmes, because he, like our own Bainbridge, Morris, Porter, and Stewart, had implicitly obeyed the orders under which he sailed, and devoted himself to that "destructive plan" which, while it was of vast service to the Confederate cause and of incalculable injury to the Federal mercantile marine, deprived him, as it had deprived them, not only of all hope of prize-money, but also of that higher reward, the distinction and glory arising from well-contested fights, successful engagements with "foemen worthy of his steel," and "combat ship to ship."

It is evident that, after it had been, as it soon was, resolved that neither treason nor piracy should be charged against Semmes before a military or naval tribunal, and that his methods of capturing, "plundering," and destroying vessels should not be treated as offences against public law and duty, but that he should be dealt with as a belligerent naval officer, bound to obey the laws of war and entitled to their protection, it was needless to inquire where or by whom the Alabama was built, manned, armed, or commissioned; or whether a government without an open port can legitimately own or employ a naval force. These inquiries, however interesting or important they might be in other connections, were of no sort of interest or importance as elements of a trial for violating the laws of war in the conduct of a cruiser subject to those laws, and protected by them.

In this way the field and the duty of inquiry were reduced to the two subjects of cruelty to prisoners and perfidy towards Captain Winslow and the power he represented.

In my next paper will be stated the methods and the result of this twofold investigation.

John A. Bolles, Naval Solicitor.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

VII.

I WAS very sure that the Old Master was hard at work about something, — he is *always* very busy with something, — but I mean something particular.

Whether it was a question of history or of cosmogony, or whether he was handling a test-tube or a blow-pipe; what he was about I did not feel sure; but I took it for granted that it was some crucial question or other he was at work on, some point bearing on the thought of the time. For the Master, I have observed, is pretty sagacious in striking for the points where his work will be like to tell. We all know that class of scientific laborers to whom all facts are alike nourishing mental food, and who seem to exercise no choice whatever, provided only they can get hold of these same indiscriminate facts in quantity sufficient. They browse on them, as the animal to which they would not like to be compared browses on his thistles. But the Master knows the movement of the age he belongs to; and if he seems to be busy with what looks like a small piece of trivial experimenting, one may feel pretty sure that he knows what he is about, and that his minute operations are looking to a result that will help him towards attaining his great end in life, — an insight, so far as his faculties and opportunities will allow, into that order of things which he believes he can study with some prospect of taking in its significance.

I became so anxious to know what particular matter he was busy with, that I had to call upon him to satisfy my curiosity. It was with a little trepidation that I knocked at his door. I felt a good deal as one might have felt on disturbing an alchemist at his work, at the very moment, it might be, when he was about to make projection.

— Come in! — said the Master in his grave, massive tones.

I passed through the library with him into a little room evidently devoted to his experiments.

— You have come just at the right moment, — he said. — Your eyes are better than mine. I have been looking at this flask, and I should like to have you look at it.

It was a small *matrass*, as one of the elder chemists would have called it, containing a fluid, and hermetically sealed. He held it up at the window; perhaps you remember the physician holding a flask to the light in Gerard Douw's "Femme hydropique"; I thought of that fine figure as I looked at him. — Look! — said he, — is it clear or cloudy?

— You need not ask me that, — I answered. — It is very plainly turbid. I should think that some sediment had been shaken up in it. What is it, *Elixir Vitæ* or *Aurum potabile?*

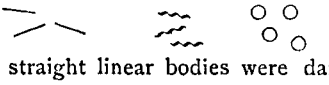
— Something that means more than alchemy ever did! Boiled just three hours, and as clear as a bell until within the last few days; since then has been clouding up.

— I began to form a pretty shrewd guess at the meaning of all this, and to think I knew very nearly what was coming next. I was right in my conjecture. The Master broke off the sealed end of his little flask, took out a small portion of the fluid on a glass rod, and placed it on a slip of glass in the usual way for a microscopic examination.

— One thousand diameters, — he said, as he placed it on the stage of the microscope. — We shall find signs of life, of course. — He bent over the instrument and looked but an instant.

— There they are! — he exclaimed, — look in.

I looked in and saw some objects not very unlike these: —



The straight linear bodies were dart-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing backward and forward in every direction. The wavy ones were wriggling about like eels or water-snakes. The round ones were spinning on their axes and rolling in every direction. All of them were in a state of incessant activity, as if perpetually seeking something and never finding it.

They are tough, the germs of these little bodies, — said the Master. — Three hours' boiling has n't killed 'em. Now, then, let us see what has been the effect of *six* hours' boiling.

He took up another flask just like the first, containing fluid and hermetically sealed in the same way.

— Boiled just three hours longer than the other, — he said, — six hours in all. This is the *experimentum crucis.* Do you see any cloudiness in it?

— Not a sign of it; it is as clear as crystal, except that there may be a little sediment at the bottom.

— That is nothing. The liquid is clear. We shall find no signs of life. — He put a minute drop of the liquid under the microscope as before. Nothing stirred. Nothing to be seen but a clear circle of light. We looked at it again and again, but with the same result.

— Six hours kill 'em all, according to this experiment, — said the Master. — Good as far as it goes. One more negative result. Do you know what would have happened if that liquid had been clouded, and we had found life in the sealed flask? Sir, if that liquid had held life in it the Vatican would have trembled to hear it, and there would have been anxious questionings and ominous whisperings in the halls of Lambeth palace! The accepted cosmogonies on trial, sir! Traditions, sanctities, creeds, ecclesiastical establishments, all shaking to know whether my little sixpenny flask of fluid looks muddy or not! I don't know whether to laugh or shudder. The thought of an œcumenical council having its leading feature dislocated by my trifling experiment! The thought, again, of the mighty revolution in human beliefs and affairs that might grow out of the same insignificant little phenomenon. A wineglassful of clear liquid growing muddy. If we had found a wriggle, or a zigzag, or a shoot from one side to the other, in this last flask, what a scare there would have been, to be sure, in the schools of the prophets! Talk about your *megatherium* and your *megalosaurus*, — what are these to the *bacterium* and the *vibrio?* These are the dreadful monsters of to-day. If they show themselves where they have no business, the little rascals frighten honest folks worse than ever people were frightened by the Dragon of Rhodes!

The Master gets going sometimes, there is no denying it, until his imagination runs away with him. He had been trying, as the reader sees, one of those curious experiments in spontaneous generation, as it is called, which have been so often instituted of late years, and by none more thoroughly than by that eminent American student of nature whose process he had imitated with a result like his.

We got talking over these matters among us the next morning at the breakfast-table.

We must agree they could n't stand six hours' boiling, — I said.

— Good for the Pope of Rome! — exclaimed the Master.

— The Landlady drew back with a certain expression of dismay in her countenance. She hoped he did n't want the Pope to make any more converts in this country. She had heard a sermon only last Sabbath, and the minister had made it out, she thought, as plain as could be, that the Pope was the Man of Sin and that the Church of Rome was — Well, there was very strong names applied to her in Scripture.

What was good for the Pope was good for your minister, too, my dear madam, — said the Master. — Good for everybody that is afraid of what people call "science." If it should prove that dead things come to life of themselves, it would be awkward, you know, because then somebody will get up and say if one dead thing made itself alive another might, and so perhaps the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

earth peopled itself without any help. Possibly the difficulty would n't be so great as many people suppose. We might perhaps find room for a Creator after all, as we do now, though we see a little brown seed grow till it sucks up the juices of half an acre of ground, apparently all by its own inherent power. That does not stagger us; I am not sure that it would if Mr. Crosse's or Mr. Weekes's *acarus* should show himself all of a sudden, as they said he did, in certain mineral mixtures acted on by electricity.

The Landlady was off soundings, and looking vacant enough by this time.

He turned to me. — Don't think too much of the result of our one experiment. It means something, because it confirms those other experiments of which it was a copy; but we must remember that a hundred negatives don't settle such a question. Life does get into the world somehow. You don't suppose Adam had the cutaneous unpleasantness politely called *psora*, do you?

— Hardly, — I answered. — He must have been a walking hospital if he carried all the maladies about him which have plagued his descendants.

— Well, then, how did the little beast which is peculiar to that special complaint intrude himself into the order of things? You don't suppose there was a special act of creation for the express purpose of bestowing that little wretch on humanity, do you?

I thought, on the whole, I would n't answer that question.

— You and I are at work on the same problem, — said the young Astronomer to the Master. — I have looked into a microscope now and then, and I have seen that perpetual dancing about of minute atoms in a fluid, which you call molecular motion. Just so, when I look through my telescope I see the star-dust whirling about in the infinite expanse of ether; or if I do not see its motion, I know that it is only on account of its immeasurable distance. Matter and motion everywhere; void and rest nowhere. You ask why your restless microscopic atoms may not come together and become self-conscious and self-moving organisms. I ask why my telescopic star-dust may not come together and grow and organize into habitable worlds, — the ripened fruit on the branches of the tree Yggdrasil, if I may borrow from our friend the Poet's province. It frightens people, though, to hear the suggestion that worlds shape themselves from star-mist. It does not trouble them at all to see the watery spheres that round themselves into being out of the vapors floating over us; they are nothing but rain-drops. But if a planet can grow as a rain-drop grows, why then —. It was a great comfort to these timid folk when Lord Rosse's telescope resolved certain nebulæ into star-clusters. Sir John Herschel would have told them that this made little difference in accounting for the formation of worlds by aggregation, but at any rate it was a comfort to them.

— These people have always been afraid of the astronomers, — said the Master. — They were shy, you know, of the Copernican system, for a long while; well they might be with an *oubliette* waiting for them if they ventured to think that the earth moved round the sun. Science settled that point finally for them, at length, and then it was all right, — when there was no use in disputing the fact any longer. By and by geology began turning up fossils that told extraordinary stories about the duration of life upon our planet. What subterfuges were not used to get rid of their evidence! Think of a man seeing the fossilized skeleton of an animal split out of a quarry, his teeth worn down by mastication, and the remains of food still visible in his interior, and, in order to get rid of a piece of evidence contrary to the traditions he holds to, seriously maintaining that this skeleton never belonged to a living creature, but was created with just these appearances; a make-believe, a sham, a Barnum's-mermaid contrivance to amuse its Creator and impose upon his intelligent children! And now peo-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ple talk about geological epochs and hundreds of millions of years in the planet's history as calmly as if they were discussing the age of their deceased great-grandmothers. Ten or a dozen years ago people said Sh! Sh! if you ventured to meddle with any question supposed to involve a doubt of the generally accepted Hebrew traditions. To-day such questions are recognized as perfectly fair subjects for general conversation; not in the basement story, perhaps, or among the rank and file of the curbstone congregations, but among intelligent and educated persons. You may preach about them in your pulpit, you may lecture about them, you may talk about them with the first sensible-looking person you happen to meet, you may write magazine articles about them, and the editor need not expect to receive remonstrances from angry subscribers and withdrawals of subscriptions, as he would have been sure to not a great many years ago. Why, you may go to a tea-party where the clergyman's wife shows her best cap and his daughters display their shining ringlets, and you will hear the company discussing the Darwinian theory of the origin of the human race as if it were as harmless a question as that of the lineage of a spinster's lapdog. You may see a fine lady who is as particular in her genuflections as any Buddhist or Mahometan saint in his manifestations of reverence, who will talk over the anthropoid ape, the supposed founder of the family to which we belong, and even go back with you to the acephalous mollusk, first cousin to the clams and mussels, whose rudimental spine was the hinted prophecy of humanity; all this time never dreaming, apparently, that what she takes for a matter of curious speculation involves the whole future of human progress and destiny.

I can't help thinking that if we had talked as freely as we can and do now in the days of the first boarder at this table,— I mean the one who introduced it to the public,— it would have sounded a good deal more aggressively than it does now. — The Old Master got rather warm in talking; perhaps the consciousness of having a number of listeners had something to do with it.

— This whole business is an open question, — he said, — and there is no use in saying, "Hush! don't talk about such things!" People do talk about 'em everywhere; and if they don't talk about 'em they think about 'em, and that is worse, — if there is anything bad about such questions, that is. If for the Fall of man, science comes to substitute the RISE of man, sir, it means the utter disintegration of all the spiritual pessimisms which have been like a spasm in the heart and a cramp in the intellect of men for so many centuries. And yet who dares to say that it is not a perfectly legitimate and proper question to be discussed, without the slightest regard to the fears or the threats of Pope or prelate?

Sir, I believe, — the Master rose from his chair as he spoke, and said in a deep and solemn tone, but without any declamatory vehemence, — sir, I believe that we are at this moment in what will be recognized not many centuries hence as one of the late watches in the night of the dark ages. There is a twilight ray, beyond question. We know something of the universe, a very little, and, strangely enough, we know most of what is farthest from us. We have weighed the planets and analyzed the flames of the sun and stars. We predict their movements as if they were machines we ourselves had made and regulated. We know a good deal about the earth on which we live. But the study of man has been so completely subjected to our preconceived opinions, that we have got to begin all over again. We have studied anthropology through theology; we have now to begin the study of theology through anthropology. Until we have exhausted the human element in every form of belief, and that can only be done by what we may call comparative spiritual anatomy, we cannot begin to deal with the alleged extra-human elements without blunder-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing into all imaginable puerilities. If you think for one moment that there is not a single religion in the world which does not come to us through the medium of a pre-existing language; and if you remember that this language embodies absolutely nothing but human conceptions and human passions, you will see at once that every religion presupposes its own elements as already existing in those to whom it is addressed. I once went to a church in London and heard the famous Edward Irving preach, and heard some of his congregation speak in the strange words characteristic of their miraculous gift of tongues. I had a respect for the logical basis of this singular phenomenon. I have always thought it was natural that any celestial message should demand a language of its own, only to be understood by divine illumination. All human words tend, of course, to stop short in human meaning. And the more I hear the most sacred terms employed, the more I am satisfied that they have entirely and radically different meanings in the minds of those who use them. Yet they deal with them as if they were as definite as mathematical quantities or geometrical figures. What would become of arithmetic if the figure 2 meant three for one man and five for another and twenty for a third, and all the other numerals were in the same way variable quantities? Mighty intelligent correspondence business men would have with each other! But how is this any worse than the difference of opinion which led a famous clergyman to say to a brother theologian, "O, I see, my dear sir, your *God* is my *Devil*."

Man has been studied proudly, contemptuously, rather, from the point of view supposed to be authoritatively settled. The self-sufficiency of egotistic natures was never more fully shown than in the expositions of the worthlessness and wretchedness of their fellow-creatures given by the dogmatists who have "gone back," as the vulgar phrase is, on their race, their own flesh and blood. Did you ever read what Mr. Bancroft says about Calvin in his article on Jonathan Edwards, — and mighty well said it is too, in my judgment? Let me remind you of it, whether you have read it or not. "Setting himself up over against the privileged classes, he, *with a loftier pride than theirs*, revealed the power of a yet higher order of nobility, not of a registered ancestry of fifteen generations, but one absolutely spotless in its escutcheon, preordained in the council chamber of eternity." I think you 'll find I have got that sentence right, word for word, and there 's a great deal more in it than many good folks who call themselves after the reformer seem to be aware of. The Pope put his foot on the neck of kings, but Calvin and his cohort crushed the whole human race under their heels in the name of the Lord of Hosts. Now, you see, the point that people don't understand is the absolute and utter *humility* of science, in opposition to this doctrinal self-sufficiency. I don't doubt this may sound a little paradoxical at first, but I think you will find it is all right. You remember the courtier and the monarch, — Louis the Fourteenth, was n't it? — never mind, give the poor fellows that live by setting you right a chance. "What o'clock is it?" says the king. "Just whatever o'clock your Majesty pleases," says the courtier. I venture to say the monarch was a great deal more humble than the follower, who pretended that his master was superior to such trifling facts as the revolution of the planet. It was the same thing, you remember, with King Canute and the tide on the sea-shore. The king accepted the scientific fact of the tide's rising. The loyal hangers-on, who believed in divine right, were too proud of the company they found themselves in to make any such humiliating admission. But there are people, and plenty of them, to-day who will dispute facts just as clear to those who have taken the pains to learn what is known about them, as that of the tide's rising. They don't like to admit these facts, because they

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

throw doubt upon some of their cherished opinions. We are getting on towards the last part of this nineteenth century. What we have gained is not so much in positive knowledge, though that is a good deal, as it is in the freedom of discussion of every subject that comes within the range of observation and inference. How long is it since Mrs. Piozzi wrote, — "Let me hope that you will not pursue geology till it leads you into doubts destructive of all comfort in this world and all happiness in the next"?

The Master paused and I remained silent, for I was thinking things I could not say.

— It is well always to have a woman near by when one is talking on this class of subjects. Whether there will be three or four women to one man in heaven is a question which I must leave to those who talk as if they knew all about the future condition of the race to answer. But very certainly there is much more of hearty faith, much more of spiritual life, among women than among men, in this world. They need faith to support them more than men do, for they have a great deal less to call them out of themselves, and it comes easier to them, for their habitual state of dependence teaches them to trust in others. When they become voters, if they ever do, it may be feared that the pews will lose what the ward-rooms gain. Relax a woman's hold on man, and her knee-joints will soon begin to stiffen. Self-assertion brings out many fine qualities, but it does not promote devotional habits.

I remember some such thoughts as this were passing through my mind while the Master was talking. I noticed that the Lady was listening to the conversation with a look of more than usual interest. We men have the talk mostly to ourselves at this table; the Master, as you have found out, is fond of monologues, and I myself — well, I suppose I must own to a certain love for the reverberated music of my own accents; at any rate, the Master and I do most of the talking. But others help us do the listening. I think I can show that they listen to some purpose. I am going to surprise my reader with a letter which I received very shortly after the conversation took place which I have just reported. It is of course by a special license, such as belongs to the supreme prerogative of an author, that I am enabled to present it to him. He need ask no questions: it is not his affair how I obtained the right to give publicity to a private communication. I have become somewhat more intimately acquainted with the writer of it than in the earlier period of my connection with this establishment, and I think I may say have gained her confidence to a very considerable degree.

MY DEAR SIR: The conversations I have had with you, limited as they have been, have convinced me that I am quite safe in addressing you with freedom on a subject which interests me, and others more than myself. We at our end of the table have been listening, more or less intelligently, to the discussions going on between two or three of you gentlemen on matters of solemn import to us all. This is nothing very new to me. I have been used, from an early period of my life, to hear the discussion of grave questions, both in politics and religion. I have seen gentlemen at my father's table get as warm over a theological point of dispute as in talking over their political differences. I rather think it has always been very much so, in bad as well as in good company; for you remember how Milton's fallen angels amused themselves with disputing on "providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate," and it was the same thing in that club Goldsmith writes so pleasantly about. Indeed, why should not people very often come, in the course of conversation, to the one subject which lies beneath all else about which we occupy our thoughts? And what more natural than that one should be inquiring about what another has accepted and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ceased to have any doubts concerning? It seems to me all right that *at the proper time*, in the *proper place*, those who are less easily convinced than their neighbors should have the fullest liberty of calling to account all the opinions which others receive without question. Somebody must stand sentry at the outposts of belief, and it is a sentry's business, I believe, to challenge every one who comes near him, friend or foe.

I want you to understand fully that I am not one of those poor nervous creatures who are frightened out of their wits when any question is started that implies the disturbance of their old beliefs. I manage to see some of the periodicals, and now and then dip a little way into a new book which deals with these curious questions you were talking about, and others like them. You know they find their way almost everywhere. They do not worry me in the least. When I was a little girl, they used to say that if you put a horsehair into a tub of water it would turn into a snake in the course of a few days. That did not seem to me so very much stranger than it was that an egg should turn into a chicken. What can I say to *that?* Only that it is the Lord's doings, and marvellous in my eyes; and if our philosophical friend should find some little live creatures, or what seem to be live creatures, in any of his messes, I should say as much, and no more. You do not think I would shut up my Bible and Prayer-Book because there is one more thing I do not understand in a world where I understand so very little of all the wonders that surround me?

It may be very wrong to pay any attention to those speculations about the origin of mankind which seem to conflict with the Sacred Record. But perhaps there is some way of reconciling them, as there is of making the seven days of creation harmonize with modern geology. At least, these speculations are curious enough in themselves; and I have seen so many good and handsome children come of parents who were anything but virtuous and comely, that I can believe in almost any amount of improvement taking place in a tribe of living beings, if time and opportunity favor it. I have read in books of natural history that dogs came originally from wolves. When I remember my little Flora, who, as I used to think, could do everything but talk, it does not seem to me that she was much nearer her savage ancestors than some of the horrid cannibal wretches are to their neighbors the great apes.

You see that I am tolerably liberal in my habit of looking at all these questions. We women drift along with the current of the times, listening, in our quiet way, to the discussions going on round us in books and in conversation, and shift the phrases in which we think and talk with something of the same ease as that with which we change our style of dress from year to year. I doubt if you of the other sex know what an effect this habit of accommodating our *tastes* to changing standards has upon us. Nothing is fixed in them, as you know; the very law of fashion is change. I suspect we learn from our dress-makers to shift the costume of our minds, and slip on the new fashions of thinking all the more easily because we have been accustomed to new styles of dressing every season.

It frightens me to see how much I have written without having yet said a word of what I began this letter on purpose to say. I have taken so much space in "defining my position," to borrow the politicians' phrase, that I begin to fear you will be out of patience before you come to the part of my letter I care most about your reading.

What I want to say is this. When these matters are talked about before persons of different ages and various shades of intelligence, I think one ought to be very careful that his use of language does not injure the sensibilities, perhaps blunt the reverential feelings, of those who are listening to him. You

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the sterner sex say that we women have intuitions, but not logic, as our birthright. I shall not commit my sex by conceding this to be true as a whole, but I will accept the first half of it, and I will go so far as to say that we do not always care to follow out a train of thought until it ends in a blind *cul de sac*, as some of what are called the logical people are fond of doing.

Now I want to remind you that religion is not a matter of intellectual luxury to those of us who are interested in it, but something very different. It is our life, and more than our life; for that is measured by pulse-beats, but our religious consciousness partakes of the Infinite, towards which it is constantly yearning. It is very possible that a hundred or five hundred years from now the *forms* of religious belief may be so altered that we should hardly know them. But the sense of dependence on Divine influence, and the need of communion with the unseen and eternal, will be then just what they are now. It is not the geologist's hammer, or the astronomer's telescope, or the naturalist's microscope, that is going to take away the need of the human soul for that Rock to rest upon which is higher than itself, that Star which never sets, that all-pervading Presence which gives life to all the least moving atoms of the immeasurable universe.

I have no fears for myself, and listen very quietly to all your debates. I go from your philosophical discussions to the reading of Jeremy Taylor's "Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying," without feeling that I have unfitted myself in the least degree for its solemn reflections. And, as I have mentioned his name, I cannot help saying that I do not believe that good man himself would have ever shown the bitterness to those who seem to be at variance with the received doctrines, which one may see in some of the newspapers that call themselves "religious." I have kept a few old books from my honored father's library, and among them there is another of his which I always thought had more true Christianity in its title than there is in a good many whole volumes. I am going to take the book down, or up, — for it is not a little one, — and write out the title, which, I dare say, you remember, and very likely you have the book. "Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying, showing the Unreasonableness of prescribing to other Men's Faith, and the Iniquity of persecuting Different Opinions."

Now, my dear sir, I am sure you believe that I *want* to be liberal and reasonable, and not to act like those weak alarmists who, whenever the silly sheep begin to skip as if something was after them, and huddle together in their fright, are sure there must be a bear or a lion coming to eat them up. But for all that, I want to beg you to handle some of these points, which are so involved in the creed of a good many well-intentioned persons that you cannot separate them from it without picking their whole belief to pieces, with more thought for them than you might think at first they were entitled to. I have no doubt you gentlemen are as wise as serpents, and I want you to be as harmless as doves.

The Young Girl who sits by me has, I know, strong religious instincts. Instead of setting her out to ask all sorts of questions, I would rather, if I had my way, encourage her to form a habit of attending to religious duties, and make the most of the simple faith in which she was bred. I think there are a good many questions young persons may safely postpone to a more convenient season; and as this young creature is overworked, I hate to have her excited by the fever of doubt which it cannot be denied is largely prevailing in our time.

I know you must have looked on our other young friend, who has devoted himself to the sublimest of the sciences, with as much interest as I do. When I was a little girl I used to write out a line of Young's as a copy in my writing-book,

"An undevout astronomer is mad";

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but I do not now feel quite so sure that the contemplation of all the multitude of remote worlds does not tend to weaken the idea of a personal Deity. It is not so much that nebular theory which worries me, when I think about this subject, as a kind of bewilderment when I try to conceive of a consciousness filling all those frightful blanks of space they talk about. I sometimes doubt whether that young man worships anything but the stars. They tell me that many young students of science like him never see the inside of a church. I cannot help wishing they did. It humanizes people, quite apart from any higher influence it exerts upon them. One reason, perhaps, why they do not care to go to places of worship is that they are liable to hear the questions they know something about handled in sermons by those who know very much less about them. And so they lose a great deal. Almost every human being, however vague his notions of the Power addressed, is capable of being lifted and solemnized by the exercise of public prayer. When I was a young girl we travelled in Europe, and I visited Ferney with my parents; and I remember we all stopped before a chapel, and I read upon its front, — I knew Latin enough to understand it, I am pleased to say, — *Deo erexit Voltaire.* I never forgot it; and knowing what a sad scoffer he was at most sacred things, I could not but be impressed with the fact that even he was not satisfied with himself, until he had shown his devotion in a public and lasting form.

We all want religion sooner or later. I am afraid there are some who have no natural turn for it, as there are persons without an ear for music, to which, if I remember right, I heard one of you comparing what you called religious genius. But sorrow and misery bring even these to know what it means, in a great many instances. May I not say to you, my friend, that I am one who has learned the secret of the inner life by the discipline of trials in the life of outward circumstance? I can remember the time when I thought more about the shade of color in a ribbon, whether it matched my complexion or not, than I did about my spiritual interests in this world or the next. It was needful that I should learn the meaning of that text, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

Since I have been taught in the school of trial I have felt, as I never could before, how precious an inheritance is the smallest patrimony of faith. When everything seemed gone from me, I found I had still one possession. The bruised reed that I had never leaned on became my staff. The smoking flax which had been a worry to my eyes burst into flame, and I lighted the taper at it which has since guided all my footsteps. And I am but one of the thousands who have had the same experience. They have been through the depths of affliction, and know the needs of the human soul. It will find its God in the unseen, — Father, Saviour, Divine Spirit, Virgin Mother, — it must and will breathe its longings and its griefs into the heart of a Being capable of understanding all its necessities and sympathizing with all its woes.

I am jealous, yes, I own I am jealous of any word, spoken or written, that would tend to impair that birthright of reverence which becomes for so many in after years the basis of a deeper religious sentiment. And yet, as I have said, I cannot and will not shut my eyes to the problems which may seriously affect our *modes* of conceiving the eternal truths on which, and by which, our souls must live. What a fearful time is this into which we poor sensitive and timid creatures are born! I suppose the life of every century has more or less special resemblance to that of some particular Apostle. I cannot help thinking this century has Thomas for its model. How do you suppose the other Apostles felt when that experimental philosopher explored the wounds of the Being who to them was divine with that inquisitive forefinger? In our time that finger has multiplied itself into ten thousand thousand

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

implements of research, challenging all mysteries, weighing the world as in a balance, and sifting though its prisms and spectroscopes the light that comes from the throne of the Eternal.

Pity us, dear Lord, pity us! The peace in believing which belonged to other ages is not for us. Again Thy wounds are opened that we may know whether it is the blood of one like ourselves which flows from them, or whether it is a Divinity that is bleeding for His creatures. Wilt Thou not take the doubt of Thy children whom the time commands to *try all things* in the place of the unquestioning faith of earlier and simpler-hearted generations? We too have need of Thee. Thy martyrs in other ages were cast into the flames, but no fire could touch their immortal and indestructible faith. We sit in safety and in peace, so far as these poor bodies are concerned; but our cherished beliefs, the hopes, the trust that stayed the hearts of those we loved who have gone before us, are cast into the fiery furnace of an age which is fast turning to dross the certainties and the sanctities once prized as our most precious inheritance.

You will understand me, my dear sir, and all my solicitudes and apprehensions. Had I never been assailed by the questions that meet all thinking persons in our time, I might not have thought so anxiously about the risk of perplexing others. I know as well as you must that there are many articles of belief clinging to the skirts of our time which are the bequests of the ages of ignorance that God winked at. But for all that I would train a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, according to the simplest and best creed I could disentangle from those barbarisms, and I would in every way try to keep up in young persons that standard of reverence for all sacred subjects which may, without any violent transition, grow and ripen into the devotion of later years.

Believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

—— ——.

I have thought a good deal about this letter and the writer of it lately. She seemed at first removed to a distance from all of us, but here I find myself in somewhat near relations with her. What has surprised me more than that, however, is to find that she is becoming so much acquainted with the Register of Deeds. Of all persons in the world, I should least have thought of him as like to be interested in her, and still less, if possible, of her fancying him. I can only say they have been in pretty close conversation several times of late, and, if I dared to think it of so very calm and dignified a personage, I should say that her color was a little heightened after one or more of these interviews. No! that would be too absurd! But I begin to think nothing is absurd in the matter of the relations of the two sexes; and if this high-bred woman fancies the attentions of a piece of human machinery like this elderly individual, it is none of my business.

I have been at work on some more of the Young Astronomer's lines. I find less occasion for meddling with them as he grows more used to versification. I think I could analyze the processes going on in his mind, and the conflict of instincts which he cannot in the nature of things understand. But it is as well to give the reader a chance to find out for himself what is going on in the young man's heart and intellect.

WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

III.

The snows that glittered on the disk of Mars
Have melted, and the planet's fiery orb
Rolls in the crimson summer of its year;
But what to me the summer or the snow
Of worlds that throb with life in forms unknown,
If life indeed be theirs; I heed not these.
My heart is simply human; all my care
For them whose dust is fashioned like mine own;
These ache with cold and hunger, live in pain

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And shake with fear of worlds more full of woe ;
There may be others worthier of my love,
But such I know not save through these I know.

There are two veils of language, hid beneath
Whose sheltering folds, we dare to be ourselves,
And not that other self which nods and smiles
And babbles in our name ; the one is Prayer,
Lending its licensed freedom to the tongue
That tells our sorrows and our sins to Heaven ;
The other, Verse, that throws its spangled web
Around our naked speech and makes it bold.
I, whose best prayer is silence ; sitting dumb
In the great temple where I nightly serve
Him who is throned in light, have dared to claim
The poet's franchise, though I may not hope
To wear his garland ; hear me while I tell
My story in such form as poets use,
But breathed in fitful whispers, as the wind
Sighs and then slumbers, wakes and sighs again.

Thou Vision, floating in the breathless air
Between me and the fairest of the stars,
I tell my lonely thoughts as unto thee.
Look not for marvels of the scholar's pen
In my rude measure ; I can only show
A slender-margined, unillumined page,
And trust its meaning to the flattering eye
That reads it in the gracious light of love.
Ah, wouldst thou clothe thyself in breathing shape
And nestle at my side, my voice should lend
Whate'er my verse may lack of tender rhythm
To make thee listen.
I have stood entranced
When, with her fingers wandering o'er the keys,
The white enchantress with the golden hair
Breathed all her soul through some unvalued rhyme ;
Some flower of song that long had lost its bloom ;
Lo ! its dead summer kindled as she sang !
The sweet contralto, like the ringdove's coo,
Thrilled it with brooding, fond, caressing tones,
And the pale minstrel's passion lived again,
Tearful and trembling as a dewy rose
The wind has shaken till it fills the air
With light and fragrance. Such the wondrous charm
A song can borrow when the bosom throbs
That lends it breath.
So from the poet's lips
His verse sounds doubly sweet, for none like him
Feels every cadence of its wave-like flow ;
He lives the passion over, while he reads,
That shook him as he sang his lofty strain,
And pours his life through each resounding line,
As ocean, when the stormy winds are hushed,
Still rolls and thunders through his billowy caves !

Let me retrace the record of the years
That made me what I am. A man most wise,
But overworn with toil and bent with age,
Sought me to be his scholar, — me, run wild
From books and teachers, — kindled in my soul
The love of knowledge ; led me to his tower,
Showed me the wonders of the midnight realm
His hollow sceptre ruled, or seemed to rule,
Taught me the mighty secrets of the spheres,
Trained me to find the glimmering specks of light
Beyond the unaided sense, and on my chart
To string them one by one, in order due,
As on a rosary a saint his beads.
I was his only scholar ; I became
The echo to his thought ; whate'er he knew
Was mine for asking ; so from year to year
We wrought together, till there came a time
When I, the learner, was the master half
Of the twinned being in the dome-crowned tower.

Minds roll in paths like planets ; they revolve
This in a larger, that a narrower ring,
But round they come at last to that same phase,
That self-same light and shade they showed before.
I learned his annual and his monthly tale,
His weekly axiom and his daily phrase,
I felt them coming in the laden air,
And watched them laboring up to vocal breath,
Even as the first-born at his father's board
Knows ere he speaks the too familiar jest
Is on its way, by some mysterious sign
Forewarned, the click before the striking bell.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He shrivelled as I spread my growing leaves,
Till trust and reverence changed to pitying care;
He lived for me in what he once had been,
But I for him, a shadow, a defence,
The guardian of his fame, his guide, his staff,
Leaned on so long he fell if left alone.
I was his eye, his ear, his cunning hand,
Love was my spur and longing after fame,
But his the goading thorn of sleepless age
That sees its shortening span, its lengthening shades,
That clutches what it may with eager grasp,
And drops at last with empty, outstretched hands.
All this he dreamed not. He would sit him down
Thinking to work his problems as of old,
And find the star he thought so plain a blur,
The columned figures labyrinthine wilds
Without my comment, blind and senseless scrawls
That vexed him with their riddles; he would strive
And struggle for a while, and then his eye
Would lose its light, and over all his mind
The cold gray mist would settle; and ere-long
The darkness fell, and I was left alone.

Alone! no climber of an Alpine cliff,
No Arctic venturer on the waveless sea,
Feels the dread stillness round him as it chills
The heart of him who leaves the slumbering earth
To watch the silent worlds that crowd the sky.

Alone! And as the shepherd leaves his flock
To feed upon the hillside, he meanwhile
Finds converse in the warblings of the pipe
Himself has fashioned for his vacant hour,
So have I grown companion to myself,
And to the wandering spirits of the air
That smile and whisper round us in our dreams.
Thus have I learned to search if I may know
The whence and why of all beneath the stars
And all beyond them, and to weigh my life
As in a balance, — poising good and ill
Against each other, — asking of the Power
That flung me forth among the whirling worlds,
If I am heir to any inborn right,
Or only as an atom of the dust
That every wind may blow where'er it will.

I am not humble; I was shown my place,
Clad in such robes as Nature had at hand;
Took what she gave, not chose; I know no shame,
No fear for being simply what I am.
I am not proud, I hold my every breath
At Nature's mercy. I am as a babe
Borne in a giant's arms, he knows not where;
Each several heart-beat, counted like the coin
A miser reckons, is a special gift
As from an unseen hand; if that withhold
Its bounty for a moment, I am left
A clod upon the earth to which I fall.

Something I find in me that well might claim
The love of beings in a sphere above
This doubtful twilight world of right and wrong;
Something that shows me of the self-same clay
That creeps or swims or flies in humblest form.
Had I been asked, before I left my bed
Of shapeless dust, what clothing I would wear,
I would have said, More angel and less worm;
But for their sake who are even such as I,
Of the same mingled blood, I would not choose
To hate that meaner portion of myself
Which makes me brother to the least of men.

I dare not be a coward with my lips
Who dare to question all things in my soul;
Some men may find their wisdom on their knees,
Some prone and grovelling in the dust like slaves;
Let the meek glow-worm glisten in the dew;
I ask to lift my taper to the sky
As they who hold their lamps above their heads,
Trusting the larger currents up aloft,
Rather than crossing eddies round their breast,
Threatening with every puff the flickering blaze.

My life shall be a challenge, not a truce!
This is my homage to the mightier powers,
To ask my boldest question, undismayed
By muttered threats that some hysteric sense
Of wrong or insult will convulse the throne

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Where wisdom reigns supreme ; and if I err,
They all must err who have to feel their way
As bats that fly at noon ; for what are we
But creatures of the night, dragged forth by day,
Who needs must stumble, and with stammering steps
Spell out their paths in syllables of pain ?

Thou wilt not hold in scorn the child who dares
Look up to Thee, the Father,— dares to ask
More than Thy wisdom answers. From Thy hand
The worlds were cast ; yet every leaflet claims
From that same hand its little shining sphere
Of star-lit dew ; thine image, the great sun,
Girt with his mantle of tempestuous flame,
Glares in mid-heaven ; but to his noontide blaze
The slender violet lifts its lidless eye,
And from his splendor steals its fairest hue,
Its sweetest perfume from his scorching fire.

I may just as well stop here as anywhere, for there is more of the manuscript to come, and I can only give it in instalments.

The Young Astronomer had told me I might read any portions of his manuscript I saw fit to certain friends. I tried this last extract on the Old Master.

It 's the same story we all have to tell, — said he, when I had done reading.— We are all asking questions nowadays. I should like to hear him read some of his verses himself, and I think some of the other boarders would like to. I wonder if he would n't do it, if we asked him ! Poets read their own compositions in a sing-song sort of way ; but they do seem to love 'em so, that I always enjoy it. It makes me laugh a little inwardly to see how they dandle their poetical babies, but I don't let them know it. We must get up a select party of the boarders to hear him read. We 'll send him a regular invitation. I will put my name at the head of it, and you shall write it.

— That *was* neatly done. How I hate writing such things ! But I suppose I must do it.

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

RECENT LITERATURE.*

IF any reader of ours is at a loss what to read on the loveliest day in summer, let us counsel him to read *Mirèio.* He will be a little sad at the tragical end, but his heart will have been moved by the finest art, and his senses filled with the freshest pictures and with delicious music. He may have thought that Provençal poetry was dead with the troubadours and the ladies who listened to them, — it is a very natural and general error, — and here in this work of a contemporary poet, a farmer still living on his ancestral acres at Maillane, he will have a surprise so exquisite that the rude

* *Mirèio.* A Provençal Poem. By FRÉDÉRIC MISTRAL. Translated by HARRIET W. PRESTON. Boston : Roberts Brothers. 1872.

Three Books of Song. By HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW. Boston : James R. Osgood & Co. 1872.

Plays of Shakespeare. With Introductions and Notes. By REV. HENRY N. HUDSON. Boston : Ginn Brothers. 1871.

Memoir of Robert Chambers, with Autobiographic Reminiscences of William Chambers. New York : Scribner, Armstrong, & Co. 1872.

South Sea Bubbles. By the EARL and the DOCTOR. New York : D. Appleton. 1872.

Around the World : Sketches of Travel through many Lands and over many Seas. By E. D. G. PRIME, D. D. New York : Harper and Brothers. 1872.

A Woman's Experiences in Europe. Including England, France, Germany, and Italy. By MRS. E. D. WALLACE. New York : D. Appleton & Co. 1872.

Ancient America, in Notes on American Archæology. By JOHN D. BALDWIN, A. M., Author of "Prehistoric Nations." With Illustrations. New York : Harper and Brothers. 1872.

"*Una and her Paupers.*" Memorials of AGNES ELIZABETH JONES, by her Sister. With an Introduction by FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE. New York : George Routledge and Sons. 1872.

Walks in Rome. By AUGUSTUS J. C. HARE. New York : George Routledge and Sons. 1871.

The American Baron. A Novel. By JAMES DEMILLE. Author of "The Dodge Club in Italy," etc. With Illustrations. New York : Harper and Brothers. 1872.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

astonishment afforded by the novelties that the world most loves to wonder at — say Atlantic cables and Pacific railroads — ought to be nothing to it. For here is the careless grace, the frank vigor, the bold, tender, simple passion of a younger time, with now and then a touch, a sidelong glance of modern consciousness, such as a Provençal peasant, who was also a graduate of the college of Montpellier, could not help giving; and here is that true *naïveté* of expression which makes an artificial artlessness like that of Mr. Morris or Mr. Rossetti so evident.

The story is that of Mirèio, the daughter of Ramoun, the rich owner of Lotus Farm, and her lover Vincen, the poor weaver's son. Others come wooing her, but she will have neither Alari, the wealthy shepherd, nor Veran,

"A keeper of wild horses from Sambu,"

nor Ourrias, the mighty herdsman; but when she tells her father that she will have none but Vincen, he furiously swears that she shall never see her lover again. Then, in the night, she remembers that Vincen once said if ever she was in trouble, she must go to the three Saint Maries of Baux; and so she rises and flies, and crossing the wide sea-meadows to their chapel on the seashore is sunstruck and dies there, just as father, mother, and lover arrive in search of her. This purely conventional little plot is the ground from which springs a series of scenes and occurrences as fresh, as fragrant of country life, and as richly lit with sunshine and blossom as any May landscape, and yet no more overloaded than such a landscape with sweetness and color. That passage called the leaf-picking, where Vincen climbs into the mulberry-tree to help Mirèio gather leaves, and they find the young birds which she hides in her bosom, and the branch breaks under them and they fall to the ground together, we suppose must be the best of all. It is the most delicate, the tenderest; it is told with the most perfect grace, and yet there are many other episodes of the poem which almost equally attest the poet's skill. The descriptions of the three different wooers and their vocations have a Homeric amplitude and fidelity and an antique confidence in the reader's interest which are as good in their way as the Sicilian sweetness of the love-making in the mulberry-tree. Here, for example, is a picture of Alari's flock: —

"Also to watch them there where they defile
Into the stony road were well worth while;
The early lambkins all the rest outstripping
And merrily about the lamb-herd leaping,
The bell-decked asses with their foals beside,
Or following after them. These had for guide

"A drover, who a patient mule bestrode.
Its wattled panniers bare a motley load:
Food for the shepherd-folk, and flasks of wine,
And the still bleeding hides of slaughtered kine;
And folded garments whereon oft there lay
Some weakly lamb, a-weary of the way.

"Next came abreast — the captains of the host —
Five fiery bucks, their fearsome heads uptost:
With bells loud jingling and with sidelong glances,
And backward curving horns, each one advances.
The sober mothers follow close behind,
Striving their lawless little kids to mind.

"A rude troop and a ravenous they are,
And these the goatherd hath in anxious care.
And after them there follow presently
The great ram-chiefs, with muzzles lifted high:
You know them by the heavy horn that lies
Thrice curved about the ear in curious wise.

"Their ribs and backs with tufts of wool are decked,
That they may have their meed of due respect
As the flock's grandsires. Plain to all beholders,
With sheepskin cloak folded about his shoulders,
Strides the chief-shepherd next, with lordly swing;
The main corps of his army following.

"Tumbling through clouds of dust, the great ewe-dams
Call with loud bleatings to their bleating lambs.
The little hornèd ones are gayly drest,
With tiny tufts of scarlet on the breast
And o'er the neck. While, filling the next place,
The woolly sheep advance at solemn pace."

For passion and force, the — transfusion of Ourrias himself into the verse, — we must praise the cattle-branding scene; and then comes that battle between Ourrias and Vincen, which is magnificent in its way, and all but visible before us. We mightily like also that interview of the two old men, Ramoun and Vincen's father, where the latter comes to ask the former for his daughter and is scornfully denied; and also all that there is about the mountaineers who come down to reap Ramoun's harvest. How good is this scene which poor old Ambroi beholds as he passes through their camp away from the farm-house: —

"Then, as he passed into the falling night,
From the branch-heap arose a ruddy light,
And one long tongue of flame the wanderer sees
Curled like a horn by the careering breeze;

"And round it reapers dancing blithesomely,
With pulsing feet, and haughty heads and free
Thrown back, and faces by the bonfire lit,
Loud crackling as the night-wind fanneth it.
The sound of coals that to the brazier fall
Blends with the fife-notes fine but musical,

"And merry as the song of the hedge-sparrow.
Ah, but it thrills the old Earth to her marrow
When thou dost visit her, beloved St. John!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The sparks went whirling upward, and hummed on
The tabor gravely and incessantly,
Like the low surging of a tranquil sea.

"Then did the dusky troop their sickles wave,
And three great leaps athwart the flame they gave,
And cloves of odorous garlic from a string
Upon the glowing embers they did fling,
And holy herb and John's-wort bare anigh;
And these were purified and blessed thereby.

"Then 'Hail, St. John!' thrice rose a deafening shout;
And hills and plain, illumined round about,
Sparkled as though the dark were showering stars.
And sure the Saint, above the heaven's blue bars,
The breath of all this incense doth inhale,
Wafted aloft by the unconscious gale."

The whole canto singing the muster of the farmer's hands to help in the search for Mirèio is most admirable for its qualities of picturesqueness, strength, movement; and there is no part of the poem that lags, or that fails to interest, save the scene in the witch's cavern and the legend of the three Maries. You feel throughout that the poet writes of all his homely themes because he loves them; not loves them because he writes of them, as the modern mediæval sham-simple English poets do; and his poem is full of little delights, — birds chirping in covert, sun shining, flowers sweetly blowing, while the greater song flows on, — which the quotation of no single passage can reveal. We do not remember where the poem once passes the modesty of nature and feigns in its people thoughts or feelings above them; yet it abounds in graces of sentiment that forever take the heart. It is, in a word, charming.

Miss Preston has done her part very praiseworthily indeed. She does not, it is true, keep the verse of the original; but she may be right in thinking it presented too many difficulties for an easy English version. We are more concerned to find that she does not always manage the English heroic verse perfectly, and can give us such a line as

"Yet no one holds it in remembrance"

for a good pentameter. There are other small blemishes which we do not care to note, seeing that as a whole her diction is so sweet and musical, and apparently so responsive to the spirit of the original. Hers is the third English version of *Mirèio*, which was first published seventeen years ago; the earliest was literal and unrhymed; the second, which was metrical, failed of the favor which this excellent translation will certainly win.

The ever-rising generation will like Mr. Longfellow's new book, we suppose, because it is beautiful and fresh as this brave young summer upon which our poor old world has just entered; but many and many maturer readers will be most tenderly and sweetly entreated by it because it is so like Longfellow, — so like the lovely summers they have lived, with the ever-new familiar harmony and color and light. They do not like the poets who have been their lifelong companions to change; they are very jealous of any difference in them, and ready, too ready, to cry out that it is deterioration. Let them give us, they say, such songs as have always pleased us, and leave all new-fangled stops for those who shall afterwards sing and listen. They are doubtless wrong; it is human nature to be so; nevertheless we can sympathize with those who turn from the pleasant translations and the grave majesty of "Judas Maccabæus," the tragedy in this book, to read and read again and lingeringly return to "The Tales of a Wayside Inn," here told on a "Second Day." The poet never has written anything more characteristic than these pieces, as our readers well know, for most of them have appeared in our pages. His delicate gayety and gentle humor have never more winningly appeared than in the Poet's tale of Lady Wentworth; the Sicilian's story of the Bell of Atri, through which glimmers the same humorous spirit, is warm with the humanity that always colors his verse; "The Legend Beautiful" exquisitely embodies his religious sense: when were ever tales told more enchantingly or with more of the author's love of Old World lore than the Cobbler of Hagenau, Carmilhan, the Baron of Saint Castine? Conception, diction, music, — it is all Longfellow; and how good it is; and who else will ever give us the like? We dare say every one greatly pleased with a poem dreads that others may overlook its principal charms; and we must ask our readers here if they remember in the Baron of St. Castine, that picture of the curate going with his lantern every night to play lansquenet with the old Baron; or that of Mistress Stavers,

"*Neat as a pin, and blooming as a rose,*"

at the beginning of "Lady Wentworth"; or those of the skippers talking together in the cabin of the Carmilhan, and of the sailing of the ship, and of the coming on of the storm; or all those touches with which the poor are painted at the convent gate in the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Legend Beautiful"? Yes, doubtless, you remember all these, and doubtless you remember nothing better of the kind in literature; and after all as we think again they are not the best, but only of the best in these Tales. The whole group of stories is

> "As pure as water, and as good as bread";

and those interludes in which is resumed the slight thread of narrative, binding them together, are full of quiet delight. With what a consummate art is this opening scene portrayed: —

> "A cold, uninterrupted rain,
> That washed each southern window-pane,
> And made a river of the road;
> A sea of mist that overflowed
> The house, the barns, the gilded vane,
> And drowned the upland and the plain,
> Through which the oak-trees, broad and high,
> Like phantom ships went drifting by;
> And, hidden behind a watery screen,
> The sun unseen, or only seen
> As a faint pallor in the sky; —
> Thus cold and colorless and gray,
> The morn of that autumnal day,
> As if reluctant to begin,
> Dawned on the silent Sudbury Inn,
> And all the guests that in it lay.
>
> "Full late they slept. They did not hear
> The challenge of Sir Chanticleer,
> Who on the empty threshing-floor,
> Disdainful of the rain outside,
> Was strutting with a martial stride,
> As if upon his thigh he wore
> The famous broadsword of the Squire,
> And said, 'Behold me and admire!'
>
> "Only the Poet seemed to hear,
> In drowse or dream, more near and near
> Across the border-land of sleep
> The blowing of a blithesome horn,
> That laughed the dismal day to scorn;
> A splash of hoofs and rush of wheels
> Through sand and mire like stranding keels,
> As from the road with sudden sweep
> The Mail drove up the little steep,
> And stopped beside the tavern door;
> A moment stopped, and then again
> With crack of whip and bark of dog
> Plunged forward through the sea of fog,
> And all was silent as before, —
> All silent save the dripping rain."

And here is the pendant almost as perfect: —

> "And generous was the applause and loud,
> But less for him than for the sun,
> That even as the tale was done
> Burst from its canopy of cloud,
> And lit the landscape with the blaze
> Of afternoon on autumn days,
> And filled the room with light, and made
> The fire of logs a painted shade.
>
> "A sudden wind from out the west
> Blew all its trumpets loud and shrill;
> The windows rattled with the blast,
> The oak-trees shouted as it passed,
> And straight, as if by fear possessed,
> The cloud encampment on the hill
> Broke up, and fluttering flag and tent
> Vanished into the firmament,
> And down the valley fled amain
> The rear of the retreating rain.
>
> "Only far up in the blue sky
> A mass of clouds, like drifted snow
> Suffused with a faint Alpine glow,
> Was heaped together, vast and high,
> On which a shattered rainbow hung."

But we must not reproduce the whole book. When you have read Mirèio, gentle reader, take up these "Three Books of Song," and learn that there are ways out of the oldest literature into naturalness as sweet as that of the newest.

Mr. Hudson's two volumes on the "Life, Art, and Characters of Shakespeare," though they do not as a whole strike us as in the nature of a revelation, contain much that is interesting and useful, and place him, we think, in the picket-line of those who are campaigning against error in criticism. His work, however, does not seem to be so much the result of a genius for criticism as a carefully trained, conscientious, and often delicate perception. The irritating repetition of the same leading ideas, too, throughout the volumes, suggests that the author has had a hard battle with himself to attain to them, and still feels the necessity of bringing them before his own and the reader's mind. His style presents a mixture of verbiage which has evidently sunk into him from long study of Elizabethan authors, with very striking and colloquial Americanisms of speech. This conflict between adherence to a style received from our mother-country and a desire to cut away into something fresh and idiomatic we take to be symbolic of that tendency in the author's mind which has led him, in spite of evident natural drawbacks, to pursue the study of Shakespeare with utmost devotion and a studied liberality of thought.

The biographical sketch gives a pleasant and acceptable picture of the Poet growing up into manhood and the mastery of his art, mated to a woman he really loves, and to whom, very properly and humanly it would seem, Mr. Hudson conceives the sonnets to have been addressed at intervals during their married life. But Mr. Hudson is needlessly piqued at Shakespeare's withdrawal to Stratford, and cannot understand how Shakespeare could have had so little appreciation of his own works as thus to stop writing so soon as he had amassed the means for building a home in Stratford;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and his manner of accounting for the Poet's death at a comparatively early age on the ground that "Providence," in its wisdom, "may have ruled not to allow the example of so gifted a man living to himself," is hardly satisfactory.

The general attitude of the author's mind in the series of commentaries on the plays, which make up the second part of the work, is perhaps best expressed in his own words. "That criticism is best," he says, "which is rather born of what he (Shakespeare) makes us than of what we are without him. In some respects, indeed, it may be better to speak as independent of him, but yet, on the whole, I prefer to speak as he moves me." From these two given lines of thought, Mr. Hudson has constructed such a parallelogram of forces as to set him in very much the direction he should pursue, and in general he is influenced by them to a well-tempered degree. His discussions of the comedies seem to us less indicative of power than those upon the tragedies and histories. The dramas founded on English history he comprehensively regards as one work, "as it were, an historical poem in the dramatic form, of which the several plays constitute the rhapsodies." Probably the freshest and most ingenious article, however, is that on Julius Cæsar. Herein he gives us a skilful explanation of the apparently inexplicable aspect under which Cæsar appears in the play. "I have sometimes thought," he says, "that the policy of the drama may have been to represent Cæsar, not as he really was, indeed, but as he appeared to the conspirators; to make us see him as they saw him; in order that they too might have fair and good judgment at our hands. . . . . This view, I am apt to think, will both explain and justify the strange disguise — a sort of falsetto greatness — under which Cæsar exhibits himself." In regard to Hamlet Mr. Hudson wisely accepts the opinions which the scrutiny of medical men first found reason for, namely, that he is insane. "Deranged not indeed in all his faculties, nor perhaps in any one of them continuously," but still virtually insane. Those who yet delay, from mistaken sentiments, it seems to us, to adopt this view will find in Mr. Hudson's chapter a forcible and dispassionate statement of the various theories.

We have not read lately any book that has given us greater pleasure, of a certain quiet and wholesome kind, than the lives of those good men, Robert and William Chambers, whose names have long been united in a most enviable fame, as publishers of popular literature of the best character. The book is written by William Chambers, and is the modest record of their career from earliest childhood to the death of the younger brother, last year. They were not rich to begin with; and their father, by mismanagement and generous errors, lost what fortune he had, and the family came from their native village in great poverty to Edinburgh, where, after long years of struggle and extreme self-denial, the brothers achieved their noble success. It is a moving story how these two brave boys, William as an ill-paid bookseller's apprentice, and Robert as a half-starved student of divinity, fought on till they united their destitution, set up a bookstall with the remnants of their father's library, bought a decrepit press and worn-out types, began to write, print, bind, and publish cheap books, and so laid the foundations of a prosperity that has been an incalculable benefaction to the whole English-reading world. They had from the first the honorable ambition to furnish the people with reading as good and high in kind as it was low in price, and they completely changed the character of popular literature in Scotland. Robert is known as a writer of taste and merit, and their enterprises had not only business energy, but were inspired by genuine love of letters. The whole history of their lives is interesting, but we enjoyed most the account of the village of Peebles and its people, which is all so delightful that we found it lamentably short. There was a saying, "As quiet as the grave or as Peebles"; but it was believed a lively as well as a "bonny place" by its inhabitants. "An honest old burgher was enabled by some strange chance to visit Paris, and was eagerly questioned, when he came back, as to the character of that capital of capitals; to which it is said he answered that 'Paris, a' thing considered, was a wonderful place; but still, Peebles for pleasure!'" This book is so exquisitely *made* by the Riverside printers and binders that we took it — alas, that this should still be praise! — for English work.

The Earl and the Doctor, who have written a pretty large book about their cruise in the Society Islands, are not to be read for useful information, or a wise treatment of well-known facts. We cannot say either that they are to be read for amusement, to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

any great extent. Their adventures are monotonously trivial; their observations are chiefly of the Polynesian girls, who make eyes at them and invite to extreme love-making; their pleasure is to tempt the natives to their forbidden dances, their philosophy to mock the work of the missionaries, which, we suppose, is imperfect and ludicrous enough in many things. The style of the book is a curious result of English study of Artemus Ward and his school of humorists, and is highly spiced with American slang. Nothing worth knowing is told, not even about the immorality of the islanders, to which the authors continually recur with a lickerish fondness. If it must be said of a nobleman's book, the spirit of the whole is vulgar.

Another book of recent travel by a totally different kind of traveller is the story of Rev. Mr. Prime's voyage around the world, in which the hopeless commonness of the material, the thought, the sentiment, is as aggressively evident as the flippancy of the Earl and the Doctor. The author's journey was from New York to California, thence across the Pacific to Japan, and so through China, India, Syria, and Europe home again; but if there was anything new on this somewhat prolonged excursion, Mr. Prime had not the gift to find it out; and if there was any interest left in the old things, he could not persuade them to yield it to his page. When one has diligently followed such a traveller, unrefreshed even by novel facts, it becomes a poignant question with him how the wanton production of books of travel shall be stayed. Can the community have no safeguard against publications that profess in some sort to be instructive, but really fall below the ordinary novel of commerce in usefulness? To be sure, we cannot bring this charge of lack of instructiveness against "A Woman's Experiences in Europe," but that is a very exceptional book of travel. Everywhere, if Mrs. Wallace does not see the most surprising things, upon every object she has some ingenious reflection which bestows the charm of freshness. There is a lively criticism on the studios of artists of various nations at Rome, which reaches its climax in praises of the "American studio. The most absorbing genius reigns here. The terror of the Italian picture-dealer, just as Germany is the thorn in the flesh of English *literati*. Sipping dew from every foreign flower, this saucy bee hums and drones through his hive, till some fine morning he produces honey, not raw dew of Italy, Germany, France, or England, but an American composition, that excites the admiration and fear of the Italian, the jealousy of the German, the wonder and applause of the hearty Frenchman, the sneer of the Englishman." From this, it is seen that Mrs. Wallace is one of the obsolescent travellers whose pride feeds upon comparisons of Europe and America. Even when using a foreign tongue, like the French, for example, — for there is no denying that French *is* foreign to most of us, — she prefers to use it in a native-American manner, saying, "Ah, le bonheur!" instead of "A la bonne heure!" as the hearty Frenchman would. There is no harm in this, and cruelty alone could blame Mrs. Wallace's vivacious record of her experiences.

Mr. Baldwin, who has very intelligibly grouped in his "Ancient America" the most useful materials of primitive American history, avoids theories or their discussion, and leaves each reader the pleasure of enjoying such as he may happen to have, or the greater delight of forming new ones *ad libitum*. The question of the mounds of North America and their builders he considers very fully in the light of well-collated facts, tending to show that they are the work of the same people who in Central America and Mexico have left more lasting evidences of their genius and culture, and who once inhabited the entire Mississippi and Colorado Valleys, and retired before more savage races. His conclusion that the mounds of the North were the terraces that sustained more imposing though less enduring structures seems well founded. But the most interesting part of the work is that which treats of Mexico and Peru, where the author gathers into convenient form the evidences of a high civilization and an advanced state of arts and science, and even a respectable literature (especially in Mexico), ages before the Spanish invasion. He believes that the history of America is traceable to a period many centuries prior to the Christian era, from records possessed by both Mexicans and Peruvians, when they were overwhelmed by their Christian discoverers; that their civilization waxed and waned through successive periods, the proofs of which are built into and graven upon architectural remains scarcely inferior to those of Egypt and Assyria; and that they were enlightened countries, with a known history and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

certain antiquity, when our knowledge of them began. We may at least half believe Mr. Baldwin when he finally asserts that the Spanish invaders found these ancient peoples happy and left them wretched; robbed them of their wealth, and introduced indolence and beggary where had been industry and thrift; gave them anarchy and slavery for orderly government and independence, and ignorance for enlightenment.

That "Una and her Paupers" will be found interesting to many readers there can be but little doubt. It describes an interesting character, and, more than that, it gives an account of the work that a woman, eager to do good, self-denying, earnest, was able to perform and yet in a perfectly womanly way. Miss Agnes Jones was a representative of the large class of women to be found in every community, just in proportion to its refinement, who long to be of some use to the world. She was well educated, in easy circumstances, and she might well have settled into the performance of the ordinary domestic virtues, but she could not content herself with that; she had a natural aptitude for severer duties, and for these she was not wholly without experience. Hence it was that she placed herself at Kaiserswerth in preparation for the more serious occupation that she had chosen for herself. Afterwards she took charge of the Liverpool Workhouse, and here it was that she found herself performing the real work of her life. That her success was very great is clear, that she must have done a great deal of good is equally certain; but yet we think no one who reads the book can help feeling the difference between his admiration of Miss Jones's noble work and a certain impatience at the unwisdom of its direction. For her no one can help having praise. She gave up everything, comfort, health, her life, for the poor, but yet, however admirable in itself this self-denial is, it is to be regretted that her life was really thrown away. What she actually did was of importance; her example, too, we may be sure, will be of great effect; but those who are most anxious to do well would be the last to wish to be judged by what seemed more glorious, instead of by what really did most good. Under proper direction the results will be as good, and the lives of the workers will not be needlessly sacrificed, and just that wiser direction was apparently lacking in her case. The struggle with poverty is real war, and needs training, caution, and the same supervision of resources that a general in the field must exercise. In the long contest, and that in which Miss Jones enlisted will certainly be a long one, training will always do more than enthusiasm; and the wise general is he who knows when to keep his men under cover as well as when to bid them charge.

In his "Walks about Rome" Mr. Hare has brought together all the information concerning Rome that every traveller who does not limit his information to the red-covered guide-book vows shall be his before he leaves that city. But the absence of one's own books, the dearness of those in Rome, and the difficulty of bringing them away, the weariness that sight-seeing so surely brings, cause one's good plans in this respect, in spite of their attractiveness, to fail as utterly as if they were made with the intention of correcting a favorite fault. The real richness of Rome as well as its interest are only known to those who stay a long time there; but for such, or even for those whose visit is a brief one, we know no single volume that can replace this of Mr. Hare's. In his Introduction he says: "So much has been written about Rome, that in quoting from the remarks of others the great difficulty has been selection; and the rule has been followed that the most learned books are not always the most instructive or the most interesting. No endeavor has been made to enter into deep archæological questions, to define the exact limits of the Walls of Servilius Tullius, or to hazard a fresh opinion as to how the earth accumulated in the Roman Forum, or whence the pottery came out of which the Monte Testaccio has arisen; but it has rather been sought to gather up and present to the reader such a succession of word pictures from various authors as may not only make the scenes of Rome more interesting at the time, but may deepen their impression afterwards." Such a book is exactly what the traveller wants; the selection has been made with discretion, the author's works of condensation has been well done. One may judge of its thoroughness by noticing the great number of authors from whose writings extracts are made, — Hawthorne, Mrs. Jameson, Mr. W. W. Story, Ampère, Niebuhr, etc., etc. We heartily recommend the volume to past and future visitors of Rome; they

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

will find it a condensed library of information about the Eternal City.

We like Mr. DeMille's extravagant fictions, in which we find quite as much truth as in many more probable ones, and in which, no matter how terrifying the situations, we are never called upon to feel seriously alarmed. Of course, the young lady whose life is saved by everybody and who regularly engages herself to each successive preserver, is going to marry Rufus K. Gunn (the American made Baron in the papal service), and so we take the wicked Italian Count and the brigands very easily, as Mr. DeMille meant we should. He gives us all the excitement of the high-pressure romance, and insures us against the bursting of the boiler; and there is much more character and humor thrown in than can be afforded by the novelists who are in earnest about their sensation-making. For this reason we commend "The American Baron," and "The Comedy of Terrors" now publishing in these pages.

French and German.*

The first book on our list, the *Journal et Correspondance de André-Marie Ampère*, is one that all summer travellers would do well to put into their trunks when they leave for the sea-shore or the mountains. It is like an innocent French novel, without the dulness that in that misguided country repels one from pictures of virtue. Those who remember Ampère as a physicist and mathematician need not fear finding algebraic formulas or chemical reactions here; there is in parts a quaint scientific flavor where he observes the feelings of his heart as if it were the magnetic needle, but this only adds to the interest of the book. His journal is an account of his courtship; the letters are his own, those of his wife and her sister. The story of his falling in love is charmingly told, with a *naïveté* that a novelist would give his right hand to attain. For instance, under the date of September 26, 1796, we find, "I found her in the garden, without daring to speak with her. . . . . Oct. 29. I saw Julie in the courtyard as I entered, but, unfortunately, some men were emptying a cart; I went into the house. I found a Mme. Petit calling, and I did not dare to speak. . . . . Oct. 31. A great deal of company. A chance in the garden lost. I brought back the seventh volume of Sévigné. I forgot the eighth and my umbrella. . . . . Nov. 2. I went to get my umbrella. . . . . Nov. 9. Julie told me not to come so often. . . . . Dec. 15. Breakfasted with M. Perisse [her brother-in-law]. Julie came at last. I stayed with her till eleven in the morning. She showed me all her jewels, told me my hair was cut too short, and made fun of the people with whom she spent last evening. . . . . Dec. 23. I talked with her a long time about Grandison, the passions, and I mourned the lot of those who do not know if they are loved. She reminded me that last year I had said I only wanted to be sure that I was not hated." And so it goes on. From his brief hints we catch a charming vision of his earnestness, affection, and seriousness; while of Julie we have brief glimpses, as if we met her on the stairs, or saw her tripping through the garden. In his calls he stays too late, and she has to remind him to go away. She chides him for inattention to his dress. Then, too, we have all the letters that her sister Elise writes to her about him. Women's letters have been so often and indiscriminately praised, that it may be worth while to say that a letter is not good, save under certain well-known exceptional cases, merely because a woman wrote it; but then, when a woman does write a charming letter, it is indeed charming; and these letters of Elise, a great many of which are given, are delightful. This book is not all an idyl; they are married, Julie's health fails her, and soon she dies; but with all this sadness we can be grateful for the picture that this book gives us of innocence and real affection, and, at the last, of bravery. As we said, it is like a novel, in some places surprisingly so, but with infinitely more poetry than most, and of course with more realism than even Balzac.

Thermidor is the title of an historical

* All books mentioned in this section may be had at Schönhof and Möller's, 40 Winter Street, Boston.

Journal et Correspondance de André-Marie Ampère, publiés par Mme. E. C. Paris. 1872.

Thermidor. Paris en 1794. Par Ch. d'Héricault. Paris. 1872.

Souvenirs personnels d'Émeutes et de Revolutions. Par Amadée Achard. Paris. 1872.

Les Jours d'Épreuve. Par E. Caro. Paris. 1871.

Julie de Trécoeur. Par Octave Feuillet. Paris. 1872.

Histoire de l'Économie politique des anciens Peuples de l'Inde, de l'Egypte, de la Judée, et de la Grèce. Par Du Mesnil-Marigny. Paris.

Im Vorübergehen. Von Elise Polko. Leipzig. 1872.

Zur linken Hand. Von E. Hoefer. Leipzig. 1872.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

novel dealing with nearly the same time. It is a grisly tale, rigid with accuracies in the names of streets, the dates of thunderstorms, etc., but yet one that will be found of interest, and full of instruction too. It is curious to notice the difference between the historical novel and memoir of the same time; how in the novel, at the time of the terror, every one is terrified; in a revolution every one raises his hand to heaven, etc.: while in the memoir we get glimpses of the people going about their business, and laughing and talking as usual. In that respect this novel may be compared with the book we have mentioned above.

For another study of the recent revolutions we know no better book than Achard's *Souvenirs personnels d'Émeutes et de Révolutions*, which has recently appeared. The author gives us modestly and with very little comment an account of what has passed before his eyes in the many days of warfare that Paris has seen during the last forty years. With the events of a year ago still fresh in our memories, it seems hardly worth while to quote any account of the horrors which all good Americans are only too ready to forget in consideration of the cheapness of kid gloves and hack-fare in Paris; but we recommend the book for its historical interest and for the personal interest, the secret of which lies in an author's leaving himself out of his work.

In a volume entitled *Les Jours d'Épreuve* M. Caro has collected a certain number of essays that had already appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. They are all about the war and the condition of France. Although at times they are noticeably weak, if not almost querulous, they are well worth reading as an example of the thoughts of the better class of Frenchmen. But no French writer seems to write definitely enough about the problem which lies before that country. They are often eloquent, they are always intelligent, but what they say seems vague and rhetorical when one considers the very active nature of the dangers that beset them. When a man's house is burning it is not wise for him to be searching his text-books for an account of the laws of combustion.

M. Octave Feuillet's last novel, *Julie de Trécoeur*, is, like everything he writes, well worth reading, at least by such as are accustomed to tales in the French tongue. It does not demand a serious examination, but its cleverness, which is its most marked trait, makes it very entertaining. Whatever one may think of M. Feuillet's writing, no one can accuse him of carelessness. Indeed carpers, whom no one can please, might say that he was only too careful. Certainly this little story may be taken as a very good example of what is meant by the polish of French workmanship.

M. Du Mesnil-Marigny has published a *Histoire de l'Économie politique des anciens Peoples de l'Inde, de l'Égypte, de la Judée, et de la Grèce*. This large and thorough work will be found of interest by the student. The author undertakes to prove the antiquity of this science, and to illustrate its history from what we know of these countries. He proves the existence of the theory of protection in ancient times, and also the existence in Athens of a unit of weight and measure taken from the length of a cube of distilled water, one side of the cube representing the unit. Moreover, the book is full of information on the laws that regulated the commerce and manufactures of the countries of which he writes. In the necessarily brief notice, which is all that our space allows, we cannot by any means do full justice to the thoroughness of this book. To dismiss a book of this importance with a flippant or even a well-considered adjective is unfair to the author and to the reader. But it is equally impossible in half a page to give an intelligent abstract of two thick volumes on Political Economy of whatever age or country. It only remains for us to recommend the work most heartily to the many students of the science.

We have left ourselves but little space for German books, and those we have received this month are but few in number. At this season the ponderous tome is not attractive, but it may not be amiss to mention merely the appearance of Henne-Am Rhyn's *Culturgeschichte*, of the third edition of Schleicher's *Compendium der Indogermanischen Sprachen*, which is not a work of general interest, and of the first part of Steinthal's *Abriss der Sprachwissenschaft*.

For lighter reading we have a volume by Elise Polko, *Im Vorübergehen*, containing four short stories that will be found as tearfully sentimental as most of the writing of that lady. Edmund Hoefer's new story, *Zur linken Hand* is not absolutely unreadable. The third volume of *Fritz Ellrodt*, finishing the novel, has arrived.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ART.

IT is difficult to know whether one should bring into the list of fine-art phenomena such a singular exhibition as that which was last month opened to the public at the Studio Building by Mr. H. C. Pratt, with the announcement of "sublime scenery in California," etc. But the artist is evidently so in earnest, and, at the same time, so evidently mistaken as to the true ends of art, that it seems not wholly out of place to set his collection in its proper relations. The first picture on his list is a "View of the Great Yosemite Falls in the famous Yosemite Valley." It would involve a much ampler and more radical treatise than we are now engaged upon to explain why the painting is not worth a detailed criticism. We must be allowed to stop at saying that it is simply very, very poor. But we must distinctly object to the practice, first introduced, we are afraid, in the case of Mr. Bierstadt's large works, of explaining in a catalogue or on a printed slip of paper precisely what elements in the subject of the exhibited picture are to excite us into awe and admiration. It is quite an illegitimate mode of assisting his paints, for instance, when Mr. Pratt announces in his catalogue that these falls are twenty-six hundred and thirty feet high, and that "Mr. Hutchings (the admirable proprietor and conductor of the first hotel in the Valley)" pronounces this picture to be "the most truthful representation he has ever seen of that famous and sublime locality." Unfortunately Mr. Hutchings's reputation for correct and independent art criticism, however he may merit it, is not sufficiently well established here to carry conviction; and it is altogether a mistake to suppose that because the declivity over which a stream precipitates itself is many hundred feet high, the pictorial representation of it should be classed as high art. There are eight other views in California and New Mexico, all of which are treated in the catalogue with a rich verbiage similar to that above quoted, and two of them Mr. Pratt endeavors to bring within the sphere of human sympathies by the statement that the Southern Pacific Railroad will pass near the points which his compositions include. Besides these he displays two large "Allegorical Pictures" of Night and Morning, "from designs in marble by Thorwaldsen the Dane." All these are very meagrely painted, and exhibit a very disorganized sentiment for the relations of colors. If he can free himself of these errors, and engage in an earnest attempt faithfully to portray beauty of form and hue for themselves alone, including merely so much beauty of idea as must come indirectly through every other kind of beauty, he will produce pictures which, though they may cover a smaller area, and offer thus a less extended ground for mellifluous cataloguing, still cannot corrupt his own and the popular taste as these must.

It is refreshing to turn from these mountainous mistakes to the mention of a private collection of pictures recently sold by Messrs. Leonard & Co. Here were some ninety pictures, none very large, one fifth of which were finished water-color sketches. The average excellence of these last was by no means equal to that of the oils. We would especially remind our readers that such pictures as the two sketches among these, by S. Triscott of London, do not fairly represent the best English painting in this line. Though clearly drawn, pretty, and lucid in color, they neither exhibit the earnest realism nor the solidity of execution characteristic of the later school. But, indeed, if we are speaking of the lack of representation from which good English painters suffer among us, it is greatly to be regretted that our market cannot command some specimens of those among them who chiefly work in oils. Could artists as well as picture-buyers here interest themselves in this matter so far as to organize at least a loan-exhibition of pictures by such men as Mason, Barclay, Moore, Stanhope, Herny, and their followers, and, if such a thing were possible, a few pieces from Rossetti, Madox Brown, Millais, Whistler, and Leighton, we think both amateur and connoisseur would make material gains from the study of them. But until some such adequate audience shall have been given to the first men of the English school, those unfamiliar with it should be warned not to attempt characterizing it in their own minds from such minor and often vilifying fragments as drift into our galleries. It seems strange, indeed, that we who need so much all the education and inspiration we can get in art

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should remain in such ignorance of what is now going on in England, while we are familiar with modern French masters. An undertaking like the exhibition proposed, however, would call for ample funds and an unimpeachable, entirely disinterested management. It may be, then, that we can hope for progress towards the desired end only when the coming Art Museum shall get into operation and be in readiness with the proper enginery to assist the popular taste.

Among the oils, which were mostly French and Belgian, were to be found some quite well worth noticing. Of those by American painters but two attracted us. There were, indeed, pieces by Tait, Chapman, and Casilear, but whoever looks for vital and inspiring art would find himself at a loss to draw from these any inspiration whatever. But let us look for a moment at a landscape by Fuller, — a dark green hill sloping down to a pool in the foreground, where the sod hangs in a torn fringe over a little sandy bank. Towards this pool creeps timidly a foolish sheep, looking half scared as if at the reflection of himself which he perhaps already sees rising out of the water. In the left are trees; behind all a pearly sky. The whole is modest, well balanced, not without a certain self-contained mastery. G. N. Cass's "Spring" displays elaborate handling, but without corresponding merits in the result. The hard, fine-grained texture of the sky and left background, where a river swims dimly into distant mists of May, is perhaps the most successful portion. The apple-trees bloom with a pink too much like that of the peach-blossom; and a drove of over-labored sheep in the foreground seem wallowing hopelessly in the unnatural brown of their shadows. There is something here that reminds us of Homer Winslow, though far less successful. The general tone is a striving for something true, but it rings with a falsetto quality that pains.

We cannot refrain from mentioning briefly certain of the foreign pictures: —

In C. T. Frére's *Encampment of a Caravan near Cairo, Egypt*, the foreground and middle are occupied by white tents and groups of Arabs, some of whom are engaged about fires that send up a faint smoke. Three or four lofty palms lift on the right their slender heads of leaves, until they stand out against the upper portion of the sunset sky. A line of amethystine hills separates the plains and encampment from this sky, which in its even splendor seems all compacted from infinitesimal grains of gold. The hue deepens as it approaches the purple border of the hills to a solemn, glowing golden-red. At the left are two dotted lines of distant birds, describing in their flight an acute angle on the glowing background.

Milne Ramsay's *Still Life* shows, grouped upon a heavy-hanging white tablecloth, a copper water-jug, from which the light slips as if it were real metal, green Dutch hock-glasses, a punch-bowl, and a lemon with the skin split and curled off at one end. The cloth has been drawn away from the right-hand portion of the table, and there on the wood lies the burning stump of a cigar, its glow perceptible through the accumulated ash, sending up a straight thread of smoke that expands as it ascends. The painter seems to have thoroughly imbued himself with the nature and meaning of his materials. Nothing can be more copper-like than his copper, more lemon-like than his lemon, nor more cigar-like than the smouldering weed in his picture. This latter adjunct, too, gives the painting a kind of evanescent human interest, — a most agreeable relief to the dead quietude of most still-life subjects.

Japanese Still Life is a companion picture to this, and would set it off to advantage by the richness of its coloring. The table is here draped with a red covering of plushy texture, and holds a Japanese earthernware teapot, two porcelain cups, and a white silk fan, all painted over with mimic Japanese decoration in deep blue, crimson, red, green, straw, yellow, and gray. It offers an ingenious study in the matching of a number of distinct colors.

The *Ideal Head*, by T. Lobrichon, is a woman's head, tossed back, the face of a faint, yet warm, red temperature, subdued with pale brown shadows, and wearing a somewhat wanton expression. Only the upper half of the figure is shown. The dress is a hunter's green, with puffs of bright red, suggesting the pomegranate and its green-gold rind. The head is crowned with auburn hair, and the heavy tresses are bound by a broad fillet of green and red as in the dress. This strange scornful head seems, in its half-fantastic yet harmonious coloring, fairly to flit past us in front of its background of deep red-brown.

The small landscape by Corot, is made up, after the manner of Corot, out of strangely few materials. On the left is a little hill bearing a clump of trees that thin

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out, as they descend its slope, into a single line of aspens, apparently, standing against a thick white heaven, their trunks leading the eye to a pool in the foreground wherein the cloudy white gleams again. To the left of the pool is a dauby old woman in red kirtle, bending down to the grass; to the right a reddish-brown cow, grazing. A hint of blue sky, melting through the incrusted white in the upper right-hand corner, saves the composition from a certain lassitude which might otherwise have marked it oppressively.

A landscape by Lambinet is almost of the same size as the Corot, and we could greatly fancy these two arranged as pendants to each other. But the Lambinet is a more elaborate composition, and seems to us to have something more like a soul than the other. We cannot help suspecting that Corot is fooling us, when we find ourselves admiring his spattery foliage, his general indistinctness, and slender evanescence of material. To be mainly suggestive, indeed, is his forte; but suggestiveness, both in painting and writing, may become too vague and airy to be quite excellent, and we are not sure that Carot always keeps bounds in this direction. However, here is the Lambinet; and, allowing the description of the two to be about on a par, let the reader decide as to his preference. A group of cottage roofs rising from behind a grassy mound, the tiling pervaded by crimson lake sparingly dispensed; on the left, a glimpse over fields and woods and hills, with birds dashing about against a sky full of gray clouds, lilac-flushed; over the cottages, again, a clump of poplars. In the right, a pond reflecting the crimson that lurks in the roofs, and perhaps something of that distant echo of sunset on the clouds. To the left of the water two women in reddish garments, behind them two cows; and in the distant field another reverberation of their duality in the shape of two more brown animals, horses or cows. The green of the meadows, which also spreads over the bank that divides the roofs from the pool, crops up with a freshness as if it were newly sprung.

A chief transaction of late on our local art-stage has been the first annual exhibition in Horticultural Hall, of drawings from the free industrial drawing-schools established during the past year in this State. The merit of the work here displayed must naturally be determined by a due regard to the fact that some of the classes represented have been very lately formed; that of Lowell, for instance, dating its organization from March 7, 1872. Keeping this in mind, we shall find the different degrees of progress in each school, as compared with their opportunities, very encouraging indeed. It is evident from this collection that the materials among us are plentiful for producing experts in both industrial and other kinds of drawing; and an examination of the cards affixed to all the drawings, giving the name and occupation of each pupil, shows that the response to this opportunity for education is enthusiastic, — the persons represented being students, machinists, engravers, photographers, etc., and one at least of even so uninspiring a calling as that of letter-carrier. The town of Lynn has the highest proportion of awards of merit, six out of its eight drawings having been marked by the committee. But Boston naturally contributes the largest number as well as those intrinsically the best. The Appleton Street class presents an imposing phalanx of large drawings from casts, models, and flat copies, the best of which are in black chalk. Those finished in pencil do not reach nearly so high a level, leaving still much to be accomplished. Boston and Taunton give the most attractive and excellent of the machine-drawings and architectural designs; but perhaps the most interesting piece of all the works is an original design for an Axminster carpet by F. C. Swann, æt. 18, late of Kidderminster Art School, England, and now of Lowell. Altogether the exhibition is a success, and we may look forward to its yearly repetitions with hopeful anticipation. In the upper hall were shown, simultaneously with these, drawings from the Boston public schools, interesting as showing what a broad and admirable basis is here being laid for a future popular appreciation of art. It is only from such careful training of large bodies of the young, and from the gradual identification of the artist with the artisan, through the agency of the industrial schools, that we can hope to reach a period of truly healthy art in this country; a period when grace and beauty shall make themselves felt in common things — in the shaping of furniture and utensils, in the decoration of our walls and the external aspect of our dwellings — to such a degree that our daily thoughts may be led easily and gladly back to nature and the delight of living. And now at last the day seems dawning when life shall thus be sweetened for us.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MUSIC.*

IT is with great pleasure that we notice a *Sarabande* and *Scherzo* for piano-forte by Stephen A. Emery. The *Sarabande*, in B-minor, is a most masterly piece of contrapuntul writing, and shows to what good purpose the composer has studied the piano-forte works of Sebastian Bach. Mr. Emery indeed seems to have caught something of the great master's spirit in this little piece, and to have done more than merely imitate his musical forms. Apart from the excellence of the counterpoint, there is enough of originality and of the more modern musical essence in this *Sarabande* to stamp it as something better than a work of mere imitative cleverness. It is a composition that, to say the very least, shows great talent and sound musical culture, and there is not a note in it that we would willingly see changed. The *Scherzo*, in B-major, is thoroughly charming throughout, and, although more modern in form than the *Sarabande*, follows it naturally and easily. Here the composer shows that he has not confined his studies to the works of the older, contrapuntal masters, and in the last return of the theme he has made quite happy use of a syncopation evidently caught from Beethoven. The *Caprice*, Opus 18, is written in a freer style and is musicianlike, at times even charming in treatment, but does not as a whole strike us as coming quite up to the standard of some other of the composer's works which have come under our notice.

We are forced to express far less satisfaction at Mr. Sloper's "Santley Album." The "Album" is a series of six transcriptions of songs sung by Mr. Charles Santley, and as such will no doubt commend itself to many of the great baritone's admirers. With the exception of the *Tarantelle*, *La Danza*, from Rossini's *Soirées Musicales*, the songs themselves are at best very commonplace compositions, and have to thank Mr. Santley's singing for whatever effect they may have made in the concert-room. That Mr. Santley should have sung them is by no means surprising, as it is but too familiar a fact that great singers have perhaps the greatest hold upon the generality of their audiences by means of very inferior songs; but we are sorry to find that any one who has been associated in our minds with better things musically, as Mr. Sloper undoubtedly has been, should have thought it worth while to transcribe such music for the piano-forte. The manner, too, in which Mr. Sloper has performed his task is no better than the matter he has chosen to work upon. There is nothing in the transcriptions that places them above the rank of the usual piano-solo arrangements of operas and cantatas with which the music-market is flooded. As arrangements of fine music, however poorly done, such things are often welcome as means of studying the works of the great masters and of recalling to the mind impressions received on hearing the performance of some symphony or opera, but as specimens of piano-forte writing they fall even below the level of respectable mediocrity.

In his *Fantaisie* upon Russian airs Mr. Sloper has trodden upon dangerous ground. This as well as his *Fantaisie* upon "Home, Sweet Home" (when will pianists mercifully cease torturing that much-injured song?) is written much more pretentiously than the Santley song transcriptions, and seems to invite comparison with Sigismund Thalberg's *Airs Russes Variés*, Opus 17; a comparison very little to Mr. Sloper's advantage. As far as the subject-matter is concerned, the two compositions are as nearly as possible identical, but in the manner of treatment Mr. Sloper cuts but a sorry figure beside Thalberg. In arranging the first

* *Sarabande und Scherzo* für Piano. Von STEPHEN A. EMERY, Op. 6. Boston: G. D. Russell & Co.

Caprice. By STEPHEN A. EMERY, Op. 18, No. 6. Boston: G. D. Russell & Co.

The Santley Album. Six of Mr. Charles Santley's most popular Songs transcribed for Piano by LINDSAY SLOPER. Boston: G. D. Russell & Co.

Grands Fantaisies de Concert. No. 1, Home, Sweet Home. No. 2, Russian Air. By LINDSAY SLOPER. Boston: G. D. Russell & Co.

Theme with Variations from the first Orchestra Suite by Franz Lachner, transcribed for the Piano-forte by ERNST PERABO. Boston: Koppitz, Prüffer, & Co.

Fairy Menuet. By CH. B. LYSBERG, Op. 43. Boston: G. D. Russell & Co.

Spring is here. By FRITZ SPINDLER, Op. 200. Boston: G. D. Russell & Co.

Mignon, Fantaisie brillante. Par EUGÈNE KETTERER, Op. 209. Boston: Oliver Ditson & Co.

Maria Mater. Hymn for Four Voices. Music by F. BOOTT. Boston; Oliver Ditson & Co.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

little theme, which Thalberg has treated with all that easy grace and refinement so peculiar to himself, Mr. Sloper flounders about in the most woful manner among strangely crude harmonic progressions and bad counterpoint, such as second-rate organists often take refuge in in their improvisations while lying in wait for a musical idea. The musical idea, however, does not apparently come to Mr. Sloper, for he soon switches off through a series of every-day piano-forte commonplaces to the National Hymn. This he has harmonized little better than the preceding theme, though if we continue the comparison, we must admit that Thalberg's treatment of the Hymn is also decidedly weak and far inferior to his handling of the other air. Mr. Sloper, after setting forth the Hymn in plain harmony, treats us to a painfully trivial variation, which at last comes to an end with a few bars of the conventional *finale* double-shuffle business for both hands. We are at a loss to understand how anybody with the slightest claim to being a pianist could have written this *Fantaisie.* Putting aside the musical inanity of the composition itself, the manner in which it is put upon the instrument, the *Claviersatz*, as the Germans have it, is poor, thin, and unmusicianlike. If this is the best that Mr. Sloper can do, we hope that the *cacoëthes scribendi* is not a chronic malady with him, and that he does not often abandon the accompanist's stool, at which post he has fairly won so many laurels, for the composer's desk.

Ernst Perabo's piano-forte arrangement of the Lachner "Theme with Variations" is quite a good rendering of the original. Of the twenty-three variations in the original *Suite*, Mr. Perabo has transcribed twelve in such a manner as to make us wish that he had done as much for the remaining eleven. To be sure, this would have made the movement almost inordinately long for a piano-forte piece, especially as the absence of orchestral coloring and of the contrasting of one body of instruments with another of different *timbre* robs the composition of much of its variety. The fear of too great monotony was, no doubt, Mr. Perabo's reason for the cuts that he has made, and this consideration is by no means unworthy of attention; but, on the other hand, the artistic unity of the whole suffers by such a dismemberment. This makes itself painfully felt at the end of the transcription, where Mr. Perabo closes with the twentieth variation, thus leaving the piece as it were with one foot in the air. Nevertheless, there is enough intrinsic beauty in Lachner's composition to make it very acceptable, even in this imperfect shape. Mr. Perabo has done his work well, considering the great difficulties that one meets on every hand in making effective piano-forte arrangements of modern orchestral works, especially of one of such intricate polyphonic structure as some of the variations in question. In order to make a thoroughly fine transcription, one must not only be a consummate master of the piano-forte, but also possess an exhaustive practical knowledge of the orchestra, — two qualities rarely to be found united in one individual. The finest efforts in this direction have been made by Franz Liszt, Hans v. Bülow, Carl Tausig, and Carl Klindworth, many of whose piano-forte transcriptions border on the miraculous. In listening to some of Liszt's arrangements of Beethoven's symphonies and, as the Marchioness said, "making believe very hard," we can almost cheat ourselves into believing that we hear the orchestra itself. It is no disparagement to Mr. Perabo to say that this is hardly the case with the transcription in hand; but if he has not succeeded in giving us those delicate hints at orchestral coloring which we find in Liszt's transcriptions, he has at least given us an arrangement that is thoroughly *claviermässig* (we know of no English word that exactly expresses the idea) and quite playable.

Lysberg's "Fairy Menuet" is a pretty, unpretentious little piece, well within the executive scope of almost anybody who may have dabbled in piano-forte playing.

Fritz Spindler's "Spring is here" is one of the composer's most showy efforts, though hardly up to the mark of some of his less pretentious compositions. Although Spindler deserves a higher rank as a composer than such wholesale music-makers as Krug, Oesten, and the rest of that tribe, yet he at times seems almost to deserve the title of *Musikfabrikant*, which a fellow-townsman of his own bestowed upon him. He has undoubtedly great facility in composing, and his ideas, such as they are, flow easily and often gracefully from his pen; but his themes are too often commonplace and trivial, and his treatment of them too much upon a stereotyped plan, to save his compositions from that close family resemblance which in time amounts to flat and unprofitable sameness.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There is a certain refinement about everything he writes, and a direct, naïve simplicity of expression, that is not without its charm, and his treatment of the piano-forte is generally skilful. He has the knack of producing often quite brilliant effects by simple and easy means, and seems to possess every requisite for a first-class piano-forte writer, excepting genius.

Another quite brilliant piece of *salon* music is Eugène Ketterer's *Fantaisie* on Thomas's *Mignon*. This is much better than most compositions of its class, though it has the one great fault of all potpourris, namely, the want of any artistic unity in form. It begins quite strongly with the Bohemian March, then passes to a very good arrangement of the *Pastorale* and the fascinating little *Danse des oeufs*, and ends with a very brilliant and effective setting of the *Polonaise*. M. Ketterer has treated the piano-forte in a large, brilliant style, and the *Fantaisie* is not too difficult for amateurs who have acquired some facility in octave playing.

Francis Boott's *Maria Mater* seems to us to be one of the very best of the composer's works. Besides being a fine specimen of four-part vocal writing, the music is throughout in perfect keeping with the character of the words, — a rare merit in sacred music nowadays. We may be pardoned a short digression here, more fully to explain our meaning. In the old contrapuntal church music there is much that at first sight seems at variance with the religious character of the text. Much has been written, especially of late years, about the seeming incongruity of setting sentences like *Kyrie eleison*, *Dona nobis pacem*, and other parts of the mass, to music in strict fugue form and often with great contrapuntal elaboration. Even a man of Hector Berlioz's musical insight has found nothing but what is ridiculous in many of the fugued choruses of Händel and Sebastian Bach, and his often too facile pen has held up much of the old sacred music to public ridicule. But though the old contrapuntal forms may appear to us to-day to be strangely unfit for the expression of religious sentiment, the *spirit* of the old church music is thoroughly devotional. We must look at what is behind the counterpoint, not at the counterpoint itself. In more modern sacred music we find less to shock us in the outward form, but we also find less of the devotional and purely religious spirit. Even in Mendelssohn we find that sentimentality too often takes the place of sentiment, and that what aims at being religious mysticism too often resolves itself into mere aimless, dreamy sensuousness. But in many of the composers of to-day, especially those of the French school, this realistic sentimentalism attains an excessive development, and in listening to the Eastern splendor of their harmony with its yearning augmented intervals and sensuous ninths and thirteenths, we often feel as if the Arabian Nights were the source of the inspiration, rather than the devotional words to which the music is set. Although Mr. Boott is avowedly a violent opponent of the old strict forms of composition, especially in sacred music, he has not fallen into this error. There is a healthy, tonic character in most of his music, which, if it shows how little influence his studies in Palestrina and the old Italian church masters have had upon his style, also shows that he has not given in to the prevailing tendency to sentimentalism of some of the modern schools, and in the composition in question he has kept clear of the sensational commonplaces of the modern Italian operatic school, which in some of his other works he has evinced a strong tendency to imitate. The employment of the chord of the augmented sixth in the last phrase but one (at all times a dangerous chord to have to do with) makes one for a moment fear that the conventional, operatic burst from darkness to sunshine, or rather from turned-down lamps to Bengal lights, is coming; but the resolution through a minor chord into a really grand diminished seventh, followed after a short silence by a calm, reposeful cadence, makes this *crescendo* one of the finest passages in the whole piece. The least successful part of the composition is the little bit of imitation, at the bottom of the fourth page, on the words *tu nos ab hoste*. This, although grammatically written, sounds cheap and commonplace beside the rest of the work. If the whole composition have a pervading fault, it is the too frequent recurrence of the perfect cadence, which, besides making the harmony a little monotonous, tends to separate the different phrases too much and to make them too independent of each other. But in spite of this there is much real beauty in the composition, and it gives us the hope that Mr. Boott will continue to write in this vein, which seems more congenial to him than the lighter forms of composition that he has attempted.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCIENCE.

A VALUABLE contribution to the so-called Darwinian theory has recently been made by Mr. Chauncey Wright, in a paper on "The Use and Origin of the Arrangements of Leaves in Plants," published among the Memoirs of the American Academy of Science and Arts. By a comparison of the various angular distances of leaves arranged about a stem, it is found that they may all be resolved into the general form of a continued fraction, of which the approximate value is such a number that any given power of it is equal to the difference between its two next lower powers; for example, $K^n = K^{n-2} - K^{n-1}$. On this arithmetical peculiarity depends the geometrical fact that, in such an arrangement, each new or higher leaf must be placed over the angular space between the two older and lower ones which are nearest in direction, so as to subdivide this space in the same ratio in which any two successive leaves divide the circumference. This arrangement is that which effects the most thorough distribution of leaves around the stem, so that each leaf secures for itself the most complete exposure to air and sunlight, besides obtaining the most ample "elbow-room" for expansion in the bud. There is no evidence that this arrangement is anywhere completely realized in nature any more than the cell of the honey-bee ever thoroughly realizes the definite form which it suggests to the geometrician as that which secures the greatest possible amount of available room with the least possible expenditure of building material. Nevertheless, as is also the case with the honey-cell, this ideal arrangement of leaves is approximately realized, with all needful accuracy, in many of the different arrangements actually found. Thus the $\frac{2}{5}$ arrangement differs from the ideal K only by 0.007, and the $\frac{8}{13}$ arrangement differs only 0.003.

Mr. Wright's inquiry into the sources and uses of this arrangement admirably illustrates the difference in scientific character between the doctrine of types and the doctrine of adaptation, of which Mr. Darwin's theory of natural selection is part and parcel. The position taken is well expressed in an excellent foot-note concerning the parallel case of the bee's cells. The doctrine of types regards the perfect geometrical cell-form as something archetypal or pre-existing which serves as a model for the bee's instinct to copy. Plainly this is a metaphysical *hysteron proteron*, or putting of the cart before the horse. According to the doctrine of adaptation, the bee's cells are slowly perfected modifications of clumsier structures of similar general pattern, — such as are actually built by wasps, humblebees, and other hymenoptera, — and their gradual approach toward ideal perfection has been determined simply by the usefulness to the species of parsimony in building with hard-earned material. It is well known to naturalists that there are great differences in excellence of workmanship among hive-bees; even in the same garden may be found cells of various degrees of perfection, none of which absolutely answer the requirements met by the geometer's ideal cell. But in proportion as the bee builds with economy is he favored in the struggle for life; so that the ideal type of cell is just that which long-continued natural selection must inevitably tend to produce, and — as Mr. Wright very keenly observes — "whatever evidence there is that the bee's instinct is determined toward the ideally perfect type of the honey-cell is directly convertible into proofs that it is so determined by these simple conveniences and utilities." The type, therefore, is not a pre-existing pattern to which the phenomena are in some inscrutable way made to conform; but it is the goal toward which the unceasing operation of the principle of utility tends ever to urge the progress of the phenomena.

We purposely choose this collateral illustration from the bee's cell, because it is more generally intelligible, and admits of briefer summing up, than any illustrations which might be gathered from the main discussion concerning leaf arrangement. Mr. Wright's very striking essay carries out the principle of utility just indicated in its application to the various systems of phyllotaxy; seeking to show that those arrangements which correspond to different forms of his ideal fraction are directly useful, or have been directly useful, either to existing or to ancestral plants as affording the most favorable conditions for the ab-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sorption and elaboration of sap. The subject is not an easy one to make clear to the general reader, and the author's style, excellent and attractive as it is for its brevity and fulness of meaning, nevertheless by virtue of these very qualities demands the closest attention. To those, however, who have had sufficient scientific training to follow its line of argument, this essay will commend itself as a fine specimen of original investigation, valuable both to science and to philosophy, of a kind always too seldom met with, and very rarely to be found in our own country.

As we are speaking of natural selection, it may be well to note Professor Shaler's ingenious explanation of the rattlesnake's rattle. The existence of this appendage has long been a puzzle to philosophical naturalists, and Darwinians have been repeatedly challenged to account for the formation or preservation by natural selection of an organ assumed to be injurious to the species. The difficulty has lain in the assumption, too hastily made, that the noise of the rattle must be prejudicial to the snake by forewarning its enemies or prey of its presence, and thus giving the enemies time for sudden attack, and allowing the prey to escape. On the theory of natural selection, the preservation of the species must entail the atrophy of such an organ, or, rather, must prevent its origination, unless the damage occasioned by it be more than compensated by some utility not hitherto detected. Professor Shaler's hypothesis, however, suggests the possibility that this whole speculation is fundamentally erroneous. Far from being injurious to the snake, by serving to warn its prey, it seems likely that the rattle may be directly useful by serving as a decoy. Professor Shaler has observed that the peculiar sound of the rattle is a very close imitation of the note emitted by a certain cicada common in American forests frequented by rattlesnakes; and, according to his ingenious suggestion, the bird, hearing the note and thinking to make a meal of the cicada, advances upon its own destruction, becoming the eaten instead of the eater. If this be true, we may have data here for explaining some of the alleged phenomena of fascination, so far as rattlesnakes are concerned; and another case will be added to the numerous cases now on record in which animals have acquired, for utility's sake, peculiarities characteristic of totally different creatures. An alternative explanation, however, has been offered, which is worthy of careful attention. The general law that animals are benefited by concealment — the law which so beautifully explains many of the chief features of animal coloring — has some important exceptions. In many cases, when an animal is especially noxious, it is advantageous to him to be conspicuous, that enemies may recognize him at a distance and keep away from him. Thus, while grasshoppers, moths, and butterflies (on the exposed under surfaces of their wings) are in nearly all cases so colored as best to escape notice, on the other hand, bees and wasps, which are protected by their stings, and many beetles, which are protected by a noxious taste or odor, are apt to be conspicuously colored. A still better example is that of the jet-black toad which Mr. Darwin saw in La Plata, which emitted a poisonous secretion, and which, as it crawled on the light-tinted sand, could not fail to be recognized by every passing creature as something to be avoided. Now a rattlesnake is unquestionably a very noxious animal, and so dangerous to its enemies that they will always do well to keep out of its way. Moreover, the death-wound inflicted by it, though usually very sure, is somewhat slow in operation; so that in a fierce struggle it will often happen that its action is not prompt enough to preclude a return of compliments fatal to the snake. When a tiger tears open the jugular vein of his enemy, the enemy is placed *hors du combat* at once; but when the rattlesnake has bitten, there is nothing to prevent the foe from employing his short remaining period of probation in tearing the serpent to pieces. Hence the rattlesnake must be peculiarly benefited by an apparatus which serves as a signal to warn enemies of his presence, and to keep them from attacking him. His more formidable enemies, belonging chiefly to the mammalian class, are certainly intelligent enough to profit by such warning and shun the danger; and as it is plainly the snake's object to avoid even a conflict, it is clear that he is helped less by his terrible bite than by his power of threatening a bite.

This explanation seems to us in principle quite sound; yet if we adopt it, there is nothing to prevent us from giving due weight also to Professor Shaler's suggestion. The success with which the note of the cicada is counterfeited by the rattle is a point to be more fully determined by fur-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ther careful observation. And if it turns out that the rattle fulfils the double purpose of alarming sundry animals that are hostile and of enticing sundry others that are good for food, it will not be the first case in which it has happened that a structure useful in one way has also become useful in another way. The question is an interesting one, and valuable, if only because it reminds us of the danger of reasoning too confidently in an *a priori* manner concerning points the due elucidation of which requires careful study of the details of the every-day life of animals. It is one of the great merits of the theory of natural selection, that it has directed so many naturalists, with eyes open, into this fruitful field of inquiry.

POLITICS.

THE humorous nomination of the ironical convention which met at Cincinnati in May has been received by the nation with the contrasted feelings usually awakened in mixed audiences by a joke; the great mass have no real pleasure in it; many whose opinions or prejudices have been trifled with resent it; a few like it; but at first everybody laughs. To be sure Mr. Greeley was in some respects a pretty old joke, and most of us had had our gibe at his knowledge of farming, his white hat, and his handwriting; but the public is something of a great child in these matters, and likes the same thing over and over again. Besides there was actually a shock of novelty in the choice of a lifelong protectionist by a convention resulting from a movement of free-trade reformers, and electrical laughter naturally ran along all the telegraph wires in the country, and set the whole Union on the broad grin.

It was so altogether preposterous, under the circumstances, and his election would be so much less surprising, that people began to say that very probably he would be elected. We suppose there never was any very good ground for this belief, and its fallacy soon appeared, and has constantly grown more evident. The Democrats, whom the gods have made definitively mad, seem resolved by a large majority to refuse their opportunity; the sincere free-traders who, in a convention that united the wisdom of the dove to the harmlessness of the serpent, were certainly not answerable for the result, have generally rejected it; the wavering Republicans, who were halting between their allegiance to General Grant and their hopes of a better man, have almost universally determined to bear the ills they have; the white Southern vote may be won for Mr. Greeley, but the black Southern vote cannot be counted upon for any one who wants the white vote; the Irish vote — the intelligent, the logical, the delightful Irish vote — will be cast, as it has always been, for the choice of the Democratic Convention, whoever or whatever that may be. These things are plain enough to any reader of the newspapers; not merely the city journals, which attempt to lead popular opinion, but also the country papers, which are simply content to express it; and in the mean time the charges brought against Mr. Greeley, and the reasons given why he should not be elected, present a diversified and instructive prospect to the philosophical observer. On one hand he is held to be unsafe for the station he seeks, because, though a man of good intentions and excellent heart, he is of so guileless and single a mind, that he will become the mere tool of the wicked, and will lead us to ruin by paths that he blindly takes to be the flowery ways of reform; on the other hand it is declared that his seeming simplicity and virtue do but cover a wily and treacherous nature, an unscrupulous ambition, an utter lack of principle. By some he is pronounced unfit to preside in the White House because his manners are not agreeable, and he does not dress stylishly; Mr. Wendell Phillips believes that he has a "secret understanding if not a positive contract" with the Rebel voters at the South to place Jeff. Davis in his Cabinet; others insinuate that he is in league with Tammany; others yet doubtless have their little fears of Fourierism, of free-love, of miscegenation, of woman's rights, of premature peace with the belligerent South, or a precipitate attack on Richmond, — of that whole order of sidelong, eccentric, sud-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

denly repentant, violently persistent progress which is more vividly embodied to the popular fancy by the name of Greeley than by any other word. We have still to wait for the stock accusations of drunkenness, ancestral piracy, Catholicism, and the habitual violation of all the commandments; but it is yet early in the canvass, and they will doubtless appear in good time.

For our part, at a moment which seems favorable for all desiring to set up a private conscience, we confess that we should be very little troubled if we were an original Greeley man by any of the facts of the present situation, save the fact that Mr. Greeley has consented to forego all his high protection principles and, if elected, not to use his power against the free-trade which he has always professed to believe unspeakably disastrous. On this point we should waive discussion; as for the rest, we should answer that no friend of Mr. Greeley ever pretended that he was a glass of fashion or a mould of form, and that he might do uncouth things in the White House, but more probably would not; that the bargain with Jeff. Davis and the league with Tammany had not the shadow of proof; that the evidence of Mr. Greeley's political wickedness was rather to be found in the rancor of his enemies than the depravity of the causes he had espoused; that he was fickle, and eccentric, yes, but his sudden changes were from conviction, and that obstinacy was quite as bad in a President as honest inconsistency; that the possession of office is itself often ballast enough to steady the most erratic craft; and that finally the reasons against Mr. Greeley are so contradictory that they cannot all be good. They leave in fact a great deal to be said in his favor, — as, that he is a man of unimpeachable private life, just, charitable, generous; that like many of our greatest statesmen he has raised himself from an obscure station, by his own unaided exertions, to a place of great power and distinction; that though he has been all his life a politician, he has never basely sought office, and never held office save once, and then very briefly; that with all his errors, his influence has always been used in favor of every true reform, as well as many that merely promised well; that he is a thorough believer in American ideas and things.

We say, a very pretty case could be made out for Mr. Greeley by the original Greeley man, and yet we should not be wholly persuaded by him. We should fear that trait of inconstancy and that tendency to panic and compromise which have appeared in Mr. Greeley at most great crises; and we should distrust his knowledge of men. We should totally object to his protectionist ideas, and we should not think it augured well for the future that he had been willing to hold them in abeyance as the price of his nomination. In short, between Mr. Greeley and General Grant, we should prefer General Grant, of whom we have some reason to think that we know the worst. Under him during the next four years it is not probable that the nation would be debauched by an entire change of office-holders; and it appears that he favors civil-service reform at least as much as Mr. Greeley does. His relations are now, we believe, all comfortably provided for; grateful citizens have showered upon him as many gifts as he will probably care to receive; the Mormon persecutions will hardly be resumed; the Alabama question is in the way to be settled, however ingloriously; and there are no very menacing difficulties before us. His re-election in view of the fact that vast numbers of Republicans would vote for him as a choice of evils, could not be taken for unqualified approval of his administration; and throughout his second term of office his acts would be subject to the scrutiny and criticism of a minority within his own party more numerous, active, and determined than that which has already existed.

We are not, it may have been surmised, very ardent for Grant; but it is scarcely possible that the Philadelphia Convention, by the time this reaches the reader, will have nominated any other, and it is not probable that any better candidate will be presented to the people during this canvass.

The original Grant men can doubtless make a more flattering statement for him than we have done; the original Greeley men are, as we have shown, not without defence; the only men who have nothing at all to say for themselves are the original Cincinnati Convention men, who expected something more than a division of the party from that body. As one of these, we hereupon hold our peace.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED